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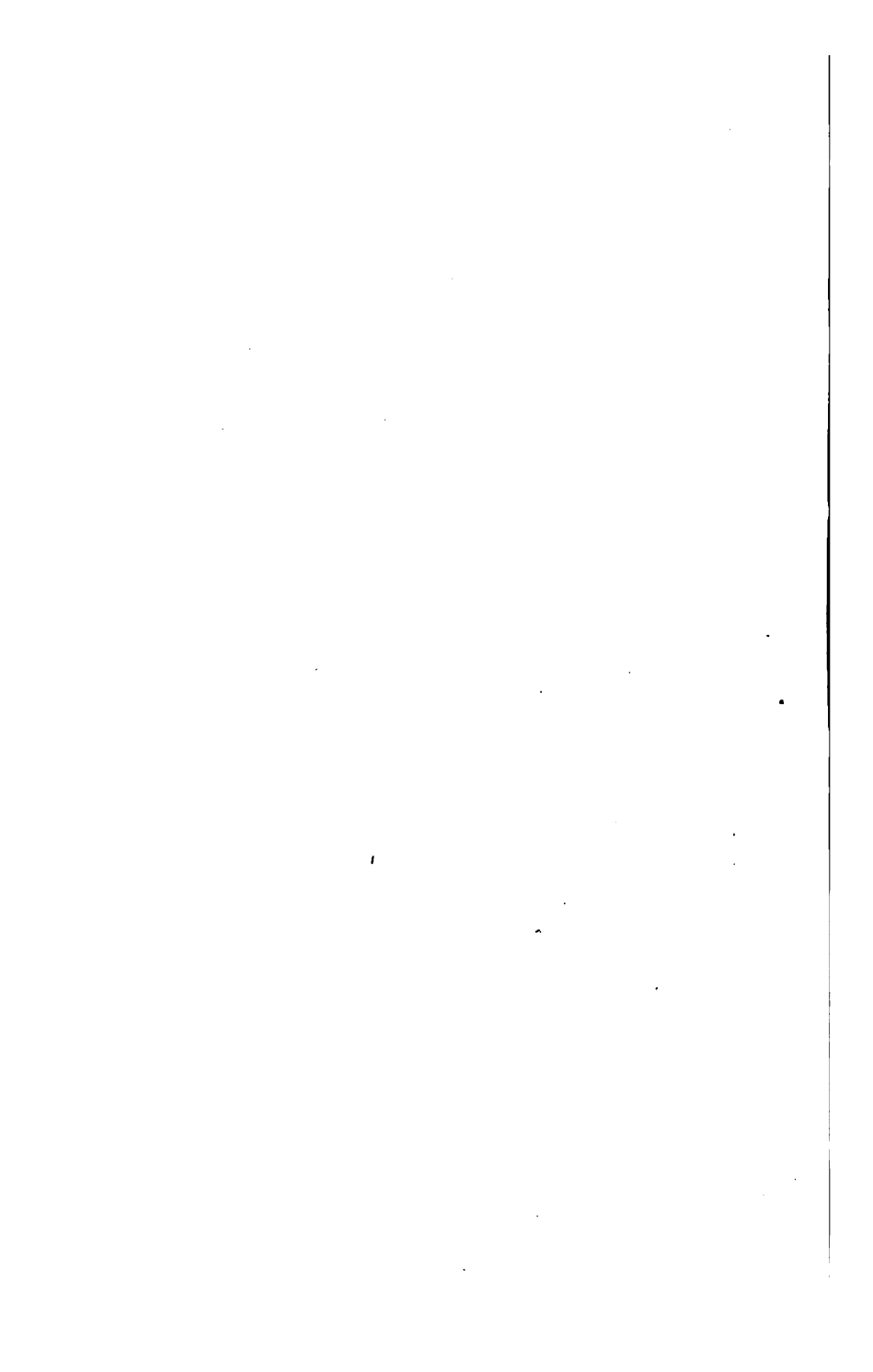
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Aeschylus

ÆSCHYLUS.



ÆSCHYLUS

IN ENGLISH VERSE.

PART II. ✓

PROMETHEUS BOUND.
THE SUPPLIANT MAIDENS.

BY

ARTHUR S. WAY, M.A. ✓

AUTHOR OF
TRANSLATIONS INTO ENGLISH VERSE OF HOMER'S ILIAD AND ODYSSEY,
THE TRAGEDIES OF EURIPIDES, ETC.

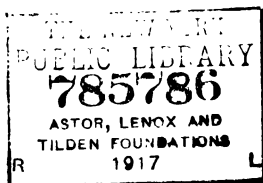
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PROMETHEUS BOUND.

ARGUMENT.

WHEN Zeus the son of Kronos had cast down his father from his throne of sovereignty in heaven, the Titans rose against him, and by strength and numbers would have prevailed, but the Titan Prometheus, whose counsel they would none of, joined himself to Zeus, who by his help overcame his enemies, and cast them down into Tartarus. But when Zeus saw all his adversaries beneath his feet, he waxed arrogant and tyrannous to the Immortals, and had no compassion on mortal men, but was minded to destroy them all. But Prometheus withstood him, and so wrought that the condition of men grew ever better, and not worse, for he gave them fire from heaven and taught them many arts for the bettering of their lives. Then Zeus, filled with wrath for the thwarting of his evil purpose, condemned Prometheus to a fearful punishment.

And herein is told how Prometheus was brought to the place of his penance, and how the tormentors dealt with him there, and of those that came after that to make moan for him, and to hearken to his wisdom, and to hear from him prophecies of things to be.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

PROMETHEUS.

HEPHÆSTUS, *the God of Fire.*

STRENGTH and FORCE, *two demons, ministers of the
wrath of Zeus.*

OCEAN, *one of the ancient gods.*

IO, *a woman changed into a heifer by the malice of
Hera.*

HERMES, *a God, servant and messenger of Zeus.*

CHORUS, *consisting of Sea-nymphs, daughters of Ocean.*

SCENE :—A crag on the side of Mount Caucasus.

PROMETHEUS BOUND.

Enter Strength and Force, leading Prometheus between them, Hephæstus following.

STRENGTH.

EARTH's limit have we reached, the far-off plain,
The Scythian steppes, the trackless wilderness.
Now must thou heed, Hephæstus, those behests
Laid on thee by Allfather, even to chain
This villain to the crags precipitous
With adamant bands, with fetters of despair ;
For that he stole thy glory, stole the splendour
Of fire all-fashioning, and gave to men :
Such sin he now must expiate to the Gods,
That he may learn to kiss the rod of Zeus, 10
And to make end of all his love for man.

HEPHÆSTUS.

Strength, and thou, Force, for you the hest of Zeus
Hath end here, not a stumblingblock remains.
But I—I have no heart to chain a God,
Mine own kin, to the tempest-haunted gorge ;
Yet must of sorest need find heart for this :
For ill it is to slight Allfather's word.

High-thoughted son of Themis righteous-souled,
 Loth mine indignant victim shall I nail
 To this lone crag with brass clamps hard to part, 20
 Where voice nor form of mortal man shalt thou
 Behold ; but by the glaring sun-flame scorched
 Thy skin shall blacken : glad shalt thou be, oft
 As night with spangled vesture veils his light,
 Glad, when the sun makes dawn-rime mist again.
 Yea, still the anguish of the immediate pain
 Shall rack thee. Not yet is thy saviour born.
 Thus guerdoned is thy passion of love for man !
 Dreadless of Gods' wrath, thou, a God, to men
 Gav'st their prerogatives in scorn of right. 30
 Wherefore this drear scaur shalt thou sentinel
 Upstanding, sleepless, never bending knee ;
 And many a moan and profitless lament
 Shalt wail, for Zeus' heart is inexorable.
 Rough is the grasp that clutches late-won power.

STRENGTH.

Enough, what boots thy dallying, thy vain ruth ?
 Why hatest thou not the Gods' dearest foe
 Who gave thine honour up to mortal men ?

HEPHÆSTUS.

Kinship and fellowship, dread power have they !

STRENGTH.

Even so : but to condemn Allfather's hests— 40
 How canst thou thus ? Dost thou not dread this more ?

HEPHÆSTUS.

Thou art ever ruthless, full of hardihood.

STRENGTH.

Yea, for it skills not to bemoan him. Thou,
Toil not for nought in that which profits not.

HEPHÆSTUS.

O loathèd, loathèd, lordship of hand-craft !

STRENGTH.

Why loathe it ?—for thy mystery, sooth to say,
Hath nowise caused this day's calamities.

HEPHÆSTUS.

Would 'twere another's lot, in any wise !

STRENGTH.

Sooth, every lot hath burdens—save to rule
Over the Gods ; for free is none but Zeus. 50

HEPHÆSTUS.

Hereby I know it ; nought can I gainsay.

STRENGTH.

Haste then, and round this fellow lap thy chain,
That thee Allfather spy not loitering.

HEPHÆSTUS.

Nay then, the gyves be ready, plain to see.

STRENGTH.

Take them—about his wrists with strong-strained
might
Hammer them in, and rivet to the crags.

HEPHÆSTUS.

Even so ; this work speeds on and lingereth not.

STRENGTH.

Smite harder !—clamp them tight ; be nowise slack !
His wiles would worm through meshes of despair.

HEPHÆSTUS.

Fast is this arm in any wise, past loosing. 60

STRENGTH.

Pin now securely this, that he may know
His scheming self a dullard matched with Zeus.

HEPHÆSTUS.

None, save this wretch, may fairly blame my work.

STRENGTH.

Now drive the wedge of adamant's stubborn fang
Clear through his breast, yea, drive it with thy might.

HEPHÆSTUS.

Woe's me, Prometheus, for thy pang's I groan !

STRENGTH.

Ha ! again shrinking—making moan o'er foes
Of Zeus ! Take heed thou pity not thyself !

HEPHÆSTUS.

Thou seest a sight harrowing for eyes to see.

STRENGTH.

I see this knave receiving his deserts. 70
Now cast the rib-girths round about his sides.

HEPHÆSTUS.

I needs must do it : hector thou not me.

STRENGTH.

Nay, bid thee will I—shout to thee withal.
Pass now beneath ; by main force ring his knees.

HEPHÆSTUS.

Lo there : the work with no long toil is done.

STRENGTH.

Now the flesh-piercing fetters sturdily smite ;
For a stern overseer doth watch thy work.

HEPHÆSTUS.

Churl !—thy tongue's utterance matches well thy
shape !

STRENGTH.

Keep thy soft heart : but cast not in my teeth
The ruthlessness and roughness of my mood. 80

HEPHÆSTUS.

Let us depart : his limbs are fettered now.

STRENGTH.

There now mock on !—filch Gods' prerogatives,
And give to creatures of a day ! What share
Of these pangs can thy mortals bear for thee ?
Prometheus—*Forethought* ! Falsely so the Gods
Name thee ! Some forethought dost thou need thy-
self

Whereby to writhe clear of this cunning work !

[*Exeunt Hephæstus, Strength, and Force.*]

PROMETHEUS (*alone*).

Æther divine, and breezes swift of wing,
 Fountains of rivers, myriad-dimpling laugh
 Of billows of the sea, All-mother Earth!— 90
 Yea, on the sun's all-seeing orb I call:—

Look on me, what a God endures of Gods!

Behold, in what torment of outrage, behold,
 I must agonize on through years untold!
 For me doth the Blessèd Ones' new lord frame
 Such bonds of shame!

Woe's me for the anguish that is, that shall be!
 Ah, where shall the dawning arise on me

Of the end of mine agony? 100

Yet what say I? All things that shall betide
 Full well I know: no anguish unforeseen
 Shall light on me. Lo, I must bear the doom
 Of destiny as I may, as who doth know
 That none may battle with the might of Fate.
 Yet, touching this my lot I cannot seal
 My lips, nor unseal. Since to men I gave
 Honour, to this fate, woe's me, am I chained—
 I, hunter of the fount of fire that lurked
 Reed-hidden, which to mortals shone revealed 110
 Their teacher of all arts, invention's crown,
 For that transgression pay such penalty
 Under the naked sky in fetters nailed.
 Ha!

What sound, what odour, is wafted to me from be-
 yond my seeing?

Doth it float from a God in his flight, or from mortal,
 or blended being?

To the crag at the world's verge draweth near

One who would gaze on my torments?—or what would he here?

Behold me in bonds, that God ill-fated
Who of Zeus is abhorred, and of all Gods hated
Which pace into Zeus's palace-hall, [120
For the love that I loved man's seed withal,
The love unabated.

Woe's me!—what sound as of rushing of wings
Is nigh? Light pinions winnow the air
That it thrilleth with weird low whisperings!
It is terror all, what cometh soe'er.

Enter Chorus of Ocean Nymphs.

CHORUS. (Str. I.)

Fear nothing! In all lovingkindness doth
gather

Our array, with swift racing of pinions
on-faring

Unto thy rock; for consent of our father 130
Hardly we won; and the breezes swift-
bearing

Wafted me hither: for clash and clang
Of smitten steel through my cave-crypts rang
In leaping echoes, from mine heart
scaring

The stilly shrinking of maiden shame:
And in chariot winged through the void I
sprang,

And for haste unsandalled came.

PROMETHEUS.

Ah me! ah me!

O brood of the myriad-childed Sea,

O children of him who for aye is sweeping
 Round all the earth with his stream un-
 sleeping,
 Of Father Ocean—behold, mark ye 140
 In what manner of fetters crucified
 On the scaurs of the mountain's rugged
 side
 I must keep long watches of agony!

CHORUS. (Ant. 1.)

I look, Prometheus, and terror-stricken
 I feel o'er mine eyes, whence the tears
 are raining,
 The darkling mist of my sorrow thicken,
 As I see thee in sun-glare withering,
 waning,
 By adamant gyves to the scour gripped fast,
 By these shame-fetters about thee cast :
 For a new grasp now at the helm is
 straining
 Of Olympus : with statutes erst unknown
 Zeus ruleth ; the day of Law is past, 150
 And the Mighty of Old overthrown.

PROMETHEUS.

Oh that 'neath earth and 'neath Hades' floor,
 Haven of ghosts, into Hell he had
 dashed me
 Whence returning is none, while his
 chains close-lashed me
 Ruthlessly round, that none any more,
 Were it God or another, might joy in
 my pangs!—

But wind-scourged now as my racked
frame hangs,
Torments I suffer that foes gloat o'er.

CHORUS. (Str. 2.)

Who of the Gods hath heart so wrought of stone,
That this should pleasure him? 160
Who in thine anguish grieves not, save alone
Zeus?—but in anger grim
Ever he hardeneth a heart unbending,
Down-crushing heaven's race;
Nor till he glut his soul shall he make ending,
Or till some foe, by craft his might transcending,
Hurl him from that high place.

PROMETHEUS.

Ha, but the Lord of the Blest shall have need of me
yet on a day,
Though he hath outraged me thus with his fetters of
adamant!—yea, 170
Need me to tell of the plot that shall wrest from him
sceptre and sway.
Honey-tongued charmings of suasion shall witch me
not, threats not appal
Ever, that I should reveal it, till from me his fetters
shall fall,
Till he repent of his outrage, and make me atonement
for all.

CHORUS. (Ant. 2.)

Dauntless art thou, wilt vail no whit thy crest
For bitter sufferings:
Reinless thy tongue is: yet, O yet, my breast 180
A dread deep-thrilling stings,

Dread for thy fate :—whereunto art thou speeding ?
 On what woe-reefs wilt run,
 Finding thy torment's bourne ?—for deaf to pleading
 Still is his ear : a heart of prayer unheeding
 Hath this Zeus, Kronos' Son.

PROMETHEUS.

Yea, he is ruthless, I know it : for Zeus doth the
 fountain of right
 Spring from himself. Yet I ween, when the hammer
 of vengeance shall smite,
 Soft in the forge of affliction his purpose shall wax ;
 he shall bend
 Low in the dust all the pride of his spirit, shall hail
 me his friend, 190
 Haste to mine eager embrace, till the sundered in
 unity blend.

CHORUS.

Unveil thou all, and tell to us the tale,
 For what transgression Zeus laid grasp on thee,
 That with such shame and pain he hath outraged thee.
 Teach us—except in telling thou have hurt.

PROMETHEUS.

Grief to me is it even to speak hereof ;
 Yet silence grieves ;—hard fate is everywhere.
 What time the Heavenly Ones first flamed in wrath,
 And strife arose of each withstanding each, 200
 When some would hurl down Kronos from his throne
 That Zeus might reign, and others contrariwise
 Were steadfast-set that Zeus should ne'er be king,
 Then I, albeit I gave the wisest rede,

Could not persuade the Titans, sons of Earth
And Heaven, but, scouting all my politic wiles,
They looked, in overweening pride of strength,
Lightly to win by violence sovereignty.
But to me oftentimes my mother Themis, [210
And Earth—one shape that beareth many names,—
Foretold the issue, how it should befall,
That not by might nor power, but by craft
Destined the victors were to overcome.
And though I spake and set this forth to them,
They would not deign to heed at all my words.
Wherefore, of paths that lay before me, it seemed
Best, with my mother's prescience armed, to range
Myself by Zeus, a welcome willing ally.
So through my counsels Tartarus' mirk abyss
Hides in its chasm Kronos ancient-born, 220
With all that fought for him. And, holpen thus
Of me, thus hath the despot of the Gods
With felon recompense requited me!
For strangely is this deadly taint inborn
In despotism, not to trust its friends.
But, for your question—for what crime alleged
Me he doth outrage, this will I unfold.
Soon as he sat firm on his father's throne,
Straightway to Gods he assigned prerogatives
Each unto each, and his dominions so 230
He ordered, but of woe-worn mortals took
No count, but purposed to abolish all
Their race, creating in their stead a new.
And this his purpose none withstood save me :
I dared the deed ; I saved the sons of men
From passing thunder-blasted down to Hades.
For this cause 'neath these torments am I bowed,

Hideous to suffer, piteous to behold.
I, who on mortals had compassion, found
Not for myself compassion: ruthlessly 240
Thus am I tutored—sight that shameth Zeus!

CHORUS.

O, iron-hearted, fashioned out of rock
Were whoso is not in thy woes afflicted,
Prometheus. I would ne'er have chosen to see
These things; but, having seen, I am grieved at heart.

PROMETHEUS.

Yea, for friends' eyes a piteous sight am I.

CHORUS.

Hast peradventure more than this transgressed?

PROMETHEUS.

I made men's haunting dread of death to cease.

CHORUS.

What salve for this affliction foundest thou?

PROMETHEUS.

Hope—blind, yet hope, I lodged their hearts within.

CHORUS.

[250

A great boon gavest thou herein to man.

PROMETHEUS.

Yea, fire withal did I bestow on them.

CHORUS.

Ha! have they bright fire—beings of a day?

PROMETHEUS.

Yea, and full many an art shall learn therefrom.

CHORUS.

And on such charges doth Zeus outrage thee ?

PROMETHEUS.

Ay, grants no whit of respite from these ills.

CHORUS.

And doth no bourne of agony lie in view ?

PROMETHEUS.

None other, none, save when it pleaseth him.

CHORUS.

How shall it please ? What hope ? Dost thou not see
That thou hast erred ?—but how, for me to tell 260
Were no joy, and 'twere thy pain. Put we by
This, and seek thou escape from agony.

PROMETHEUS.

Easy for him, who keeps his foot by woes
Untrapped, to school and counsel him that tastes
Misfortune ! All these things I knew before.
Wilfully erred I, wilfully ; I deny not ;
And, aiding mortals, for myself found pains.
Yet nowise looked I by such penalty
'Twixt heaven and earth to wither against the crags,
Whose portion is this desolate lone cliff. 270
Yet for these present pangs lament ye not,
But earthward stoop, and fortunes yet to come
Hear ye, and so unto the end learn all.

Heed me, O heed me! Sympathize with one
Now anguished! Lo, affliction, prowling ever,
Coucheth to leap on this one now, now that.

CHORUS.

Not to the loth thine appealing,
Prometheus, hath uttered its wail.
From the car-seat lightly hath leapt
My foot, from the pure paths swept
But by pinions of birds, and hath
stept 280
On the rock. I would hear the revealing
Of thy travail, yea, all the tale.

Enter Ocean, in a chariot drawn by a winged dragon.

OCEAN.

Lo, now is the end of my long wayfaring attained,
Prometheus; to thee have I won:
This dragon of pinions swift unbitted, unreined,
By my will aye guided I on.
In all thine affliction afflicted am I, know thou:—
Sooth, kinship constraineth me; 290
Yet, were kinship as nothing, there is none other, I
trow,
Should have more honour of me.
Thou shalt prove this true: no flattery fruitless of
deed
Is in me:—come now, make claim
Of service from me; for loyaller friend in need
Than Ocean thou never shalt name.

PROMETHEUS.

What is thy purpose? Art thou come—thou too—

To gaze upon my pain ? How hast thou dared
To leave the stream that bears thy name, the caves 300
Self-wrought, rock-vaulted, and to seek this land,
Birth-bed of iron ? Com'st thou to behold
My misery, chafe with me against my wrongs ?
Look thou upon this show—this friend of Zeus,
Who helped to stablish Zeus's despot-sway—
See with what torments I am racked by him !

OCEAN.

I see, Prometheus, and would counsel thee,
Though thou be cunning-witted, wiseliest.
Know thyself : change thy course and choose a new ;
For a new ruler lords it o'er the Gods. 310
But if thou hurl forth these rough dagger-words,
Haply shall Zeus, albeit afar on high
Throned, hear thee, and the throng of pangs that now
Crushes thee, shall but seem mere sport of babes.
O hapless one, put by thy hoarded wrath,
And from this anguish seek deliverance !
Old and outworn thou deem'st my rede perchance ;
Yet surely such the wage is that is earned,
Prometheus, by the over-vaunting tongue.
But not yet humbled dost thou yield to ills, 320
And to thy present load wouldst fain add more.
Thou wilt not, if thou take for teacher me,
Spurn with thy foot the goad, discerning that
A despot stern, impeached of none, bears rule.
And now will I depart, and will essay
If from these pains I may avail to free thee.
But thou, be still, be not too furious-tongued.
Dost thou, so overwise, not know full well
That on the rash tongue punishment doth wait ?

PROMETHEUS.

O happy thou, to stand so clear of blame, 330
Who yet didst share mine emprise, brave my perils!
And now, let be : thou trouble not thyself.
Thou shalt not bend him, the inexorable.
Take heed thy mission bring thyself no harm.

OCEAN.

O wiser counsellor of thy neighbours thou
Than of thyself!—by deeds I judge, not words.
Yet mine essay do thou nowise withstand ;
For confident am I that Zeus will grant
This boon to me, to loose thee from thy pains.

PROMETHEUS.

O yea, I thank thee, and will ever thank ! 340
No lack of zeal in thee ! Yet trouble not
Thyself ; for vainly, nowise helping me,
Shalt thou strive—if to strive be thy desire.
Nay, hold thy peace, and stand thou clear of all :
For, though I be unhappy, not for this
Would I that many more taste misery.
Nay, nay, my brother's fate afflicted me,
The doom of Atlas, who at evening's bourne
Stands, on his shoulders bearing up the pillars
'Twixt heaven and earth, no burden light to clasp. 350
Yea, pitying I beheld the earth-born dweller
In caves Cilician, monster terrible,
Fierce hundred-headed Typhon, quelled by might
O'ermastering, who against heaven's host uprose
Hissing out slaughter from his terrible jaws ;
Whose eyes a gorgon-glaring splendour flashed,

As who should trample down the throne of Zeus.
But Zeus's bolt unsleeping came on him,
Down-swooping lightning, breathing breath of flame,
Which from his vaunts high-sounding dashed him
down ; 360

For, pierced to the very heart, was he consumed
To ashes ; thunder-blasted was his strength.
And now, a helpless bulk, stretched nervelessly
He lieth hard beside the strait sea-gorge,
As in a gin crushed under Etna's roots,
While, on the crest high-throned, the Fire-god smites
The red ore, whence hereafter shall burst forth
Rivers of fire, devouring with fierce jaws
Fair-fruited Sicily's tilth-lands softly swelled.
Such fury Typhon shall send seething up 370
In lightnings of red-hot fire-breathing surge,
Though by Zeus' levin unto ashes scorched.
Thou art no novice, nor thou needest me
To teach thee :—save thyself, thou knowest how.
But I will drain the cup of this my doom
Till Zeus's spirit have refrained from wrath.

OCEAN.

Know'st thou, Prometheus, not so much as this,
That words may medicine hot-seething rage ?

PROMETHEUS.

Ay, if one timely soothe the fevered heart,
And crush not down its swellings by main force. 380

OCEAN.

Nay, but in heedful venturing seest thou
Risk of aught penal ?—prithee, answer me.

PROMETHEUS.

Labour in vain and witless folly I see.

OCEAN.

E'en let me bear this mine infirmity :
Wisdom in folly's semblance is great gain.

PROMETHEUS.

Nay, mine should this fool's error seem to be.

OCEAN.

'Tis plain thine answer drives me backward home.

PROMETHEUS.

Ay : let no moan for me bring hate on thee !—

OCEAN.

With him new-seated on the almighty throne ?

PROMETHEUS.

Beware thou lest his heart be wroth with thee ! 390

OCEAN.

My monitor is thy calamity.

PROMETHEUS.

Away !—set forth !—hold fast to thine intent.

OCEAN.

No need to urge : I was at point to part ;
For my winged dragon winnoweth even now
Air's smooth path with his pinions, and with joy
Shall couch to rest within his stall at home.

[Exit.]

CHORUS.

(Str. 1.)

I bemoan thee, Prometheus, plain-
Thy fell fate : tears from mine eyes,
As the fountains of pity uprise, 400
Over my cheeks are raining.

For the new day's dawn is a darkness here ;
For the laws of a despot the world obeyeth ;
O'er the old Gods Zeus for a sceptre swayeth
A tyrant's spear.

(Ant. 1)

All earth is in bitterness crying :
They wail for the glory gone,
For the splendour of old they moan,
For thy brethren and thee low-lying.
Yea, all whose fathers from far away 410
Unto Asia the hallowed journeyed, are moaning
Over these thine afflictions, they groan with thy
groaning—
Mortals they,—

(Str. 2)

And the maidens in Kolchis-land
That dwell, which have known never fear
Of the fray, and the warrior-band
Of Scythia, abiders near
To the uttermost border of earth, by the shores of
Mæotis' mere,

(Ant. 2)

And Arabia's flower of war, 420
Whose sentinel strongholds crown
Many a beetling scaur
Whereover doth Caucasus frown,
Whose battle-roar thunders when spears like charg-
ing prow sweep down.

One only in agonies like unto thine
 Crushed down, and with outrage of adamant chain,
 Have I seen, even Atlas, the Titan divine,
 Who groans evermore 'neath the merciless
 strain
 Of the earthward-bowing vault of the heaven that
 his shoulders sustain. 430

Keeping time to his groans the sea-surge falling
 Roareth indignant; abysses sigh,
 Chasms whence voices in thunder calling
 From the underworld blackness of Hades cry;
 And pure-welling river-springs sob in an anguish of
 sympathy.

PROMETHEUS.

O think not ye 'tis pride or self-will seals
 My lips: nay, 'tis reflection wrings my heart,
 Who see myself thus shamefully entreated.
 And yet to these new Gods who, who but I
 Throughout apportioned their prerogatives?— 440
 Of that no more: I should but tell you things
 You know. The tale of mortals' miseries
 Hear ye—how erstwhile witless as they were,
 I gave them reason, dowered them with souls.
 And I will tell—in no wise blaming men,
 But setting forth the love my bounty proved:—
 First, having eyesight, all in vain they saw,
 And hearing heard not: impotent as shapes
 Of dreams, their weary days through, they discerned
 The several use of nought, conceived not dwellings
 Brick-fashioned, sunlit, nor the wood-wright's craft,
 But in earth-burrows like to tiny ants .

Dwelt in the sunless lurking-rifts of caves.
Of winter certain token had they none,
None of spring flower-bestarred, nor harvest-crowned
Summer, but undiscerning, all their toil
They wrought, until the risings of the stars
I taught them, and their dubious setting-times.
Number withal, of shrewd inventions chief,
Devised I, and the letters' marshalling, 460
And Memory all-creating, mother of song.
And I first bowed huge beasts beneath the yoke,
To be the thralls of harness, that their frames
Might lighten mortals of their sorest strain
Of toil : I 'neath the car-yoke led the steeds
That love the rein, the pride of princely pomp.
And those sea-rovers, chariots canvas-winged
Of mariners, none other did contrive.
Even such inventions found I out—ah me !—
For mortals ; yet myself device have none 470
Whereby to rid me of this present woe.

CHORUS.

Thou hast suffered shameful scathe ; and, wit-bereft,
Art 'wildered now, and, like some skillless leech
Laid by disease low, dost despair, nor canst
Find by what salves thyself art curable.

PROMETHEUS.

More wilt thou marvel when thou hear'st the rest,—
What sciences, what arts did I devise ;
The chiefest this—if any were diseased,
There was no remedy, no herb to eat,
No salve, no draught : for lack of healing balms 480
They wasted fleshless, till I showed to them

Minglings of pain-assuaging remedies,
Which against all diseases buckler them.
I mapped out divination's diverse paths :
Of dreams, I first distinguished which to hold
True vision : spirit-voices hard to interpret
Revealed I ; journeying-tokens therewithal.
All flight of crook-clawed fowl did I define,
Even such by nature as propitious are,
Or unpropitious, and the way of life 490
Of each ; what enmity, what love each bears
To other, what their congregatings mean.
Smoothness of inwards of beasts sacrificed,
Their hue, which are well-pleasing to the Gods,
The gall, the liver's dappled shapeliness—
I set forth the significance of all.
The legs in fat enfolded did I burn,
And the long chine, and guided mortals so
Through that art's mazes ; and flame-tokens I
Bared to their eyes, which erst were darkness-veiled.
Such were my boons : but, for the precious things 500
For man's help, hidden deep below the earth,
Her hoards of copper, iron, silver, gold—
Who dare say that before me he found these ?
None, well I know, save who would babble lies.
In one short word knit up, learn all these things :—
All arts to mortals from Prometheus came.

CHORUS.

Yet out of season prithee help not men,
So as to be of thine own miseries
Mindless. Thy bonds shall yet, good hope have I,
Be loosed, thou be in might no less than Zeus. 510

PROMETHEUS.

Such issue this shall have not yet : so Fate
Ordains, the All-fulfiller. Pains untold
And woes shall rack me, ere I 'scape my chains ;
For Art is weaker far than Destiny.

CHORUS.

Who, then, is he which helmeth Destiny ?

PROMETHEUS.

The three Fates, and the unforgetting Furies.

CHORUS.

Ha ! and is Zeus less puissant, then, than these ?

PROMETHEUS.

Yea, for the doom fixed cannot he escape.

CHORUS.

What doom for Zeus is fixed, save sway eterne ?

PROMETHEUS.

[520

Of this may ye learn no more : nay, urge me not.

CHORUS.

Sure, 'tis some awful mystery thou dost veil.

PROMETHEUS.

Turn to some other theme : to speak of that
Nowise is this the hour. To the uttermost
Must it be cloked. By this inviolate kept,
From shameful bonds and pangs can I escape.

CHORUS.

(Str. 1.)

Never may Zeus, the all-controlling, lay
His might a bar athwart my purposed way.

Ne'er may I swerve aside, to draw not nigh [530
The holy feasts of Gods, that steam with slaughters
Of oxen, where my Father's Ocean-waters

Glide sleeplessly.

Mine be it to abstain from sin
Of lightest words : mine heart within
May this resolve be rooted aye,
Nor ever die.

(Ant. 1.)

O but 'tis sweet to link day unto day
With dreadless hopes, to keep a constant May

Within the heart of sunny-smiling cheer !—
But ah, Prometheus, seeing thee I shiver, 540
Thee with a thousand pangs tormented ever,

Whose hope is fear ;

For, standing not of Zeus in awe,
Thou madest thine own heart thy law,
Didst man against the Gods array,
To hold him dear.

(Str. 2.)

Lo, is thy boon not bootless, friend, for thee ?

Whence cometh help, deliverance whence ?
From creatures of a day ?—Canst thou not see
The utter impotence,

Faint as a dream, wherein the purblind race

Of men in bondage fettered lies ? 550
Never shall Zeus's ordered rule give place
To mortal man's device.

(Ant. 2.)

This learnt I as on thy fell doom I gazed,
Prometheus—ah, far other strain
Flew birdlike to my lips, what time I raised
The marriage-hymn's refrain
By bridal bath and couch, when Hesione,
Our sister, to thine halls was led,
By bride-gifts from her father won, to be
The sharer of thy bed. 560

Enter Io.

Io.

What land?—what tribe?—who is this that I see
Yonder curbed with a curb of stone,
Storm-buffed? What is the sin thou hast done,
That such punishment racks thee? Tell unto me
To what land have I wandered in misery.
Woe's me for mine agony!
Again the envenomed breese!—it is stinging me now!
Lo, there doth the phantom of Argus the earth-born
glide!
Earth, save me!—drive him afar from me thou!
O look on the neat-herd myriad-eyed!
Cunningly watching me onward he stealeth, 570
Whom earth not even in death concealeth,
But he riseth up from the nethergloom hollows,
And the misery-worn like a sleuth-hound follows,
And chaseth me homeless and famished lone seas
beside.

(Str.)

Low sounds the waxèd panpipe, low,
A slumber-breathing strain. . . . Ah woe!
Where shall my weary wanderings find an ending?

Why didst thou, when thou foundest me offending,
 Lay on me, Kronos' Son, this yoke of pain?
 Wherefore in agony of frenzied brain, 580
 Breese-driven, dost thou torment me so?
 Burn me with fire, or hide me 'neath the sod,
 Or to sea-monsters for their ravin fling!
 Begrudge not this my prayer to me, ah God!—
 This one, O King!
 Suffice, suffice the wanderings that have driven me
 So wearily—nor, far as I have strayed,
 Can I discern what goal of pain is given me!
 Hear'st thou?—or unto heavens of brass hath prayed
 The hornèd maid?

PROMETHEUS.

Can I but hear the hornet-haunted maid
 Inachus' child, who set Zeus' heart aflame 590
 With passion, who by Hera's hatred now
 O'er endless courses furiously is chased?

Io. (Ant.)

My father's name!—thou know'st it—how?
 Answer the wretched, who art thou?
 Who, hapless, that with words so true hast hailed me,
 Hast named the affliction wherewith Gods assailed me,
 Which wastes the wanderer with its venomèd sting
 Till with mad leaping fleeing famishing,
 With frenzied speed—constrained to bow 600
 'Neath Hera's yoke of spite—I come? Whose fate,
 Of all earth's tortured ones, is like to this!
 Ah tell what pangs for mine enduring wait,
 What hope there is,

What balm of healing for the misery-laden !
Declare it, if thou knowest things to be.
Unto the homeless woeful-wandering maiden
Tell the veiled secret of futurity—
Speak it to me !

PROMETHEUS.

All thou wouldst fain know, clearly will I tell,
Not wrapped in riddles, but in plainest speech, 610
As fits that friend unlock his lips to friend.
Prometheus seest thou, giver of fire to men.

Io.

O thou who hast risen on men a light of help,
Hapless Prometheus, why thus sufferest thou ?

PROMETHEUS.

I have ceased but now to chant my misery's dirge.

Io.

Wilt thou not then vouchsafe me this one boon ?

PROMETHEUS.

Speak thy request : thou shalt learn all from me.

Io.

Declare who in this rock-rift fettered thee.

PROMETHEUS.

Zeus' purpose was it, and the Fire-god's hand.

Io.

For what transgressions pay'st thou penalty ? 620

PROMETHEUS.

Let that which I have told suffice for thee.

IO.

Nay, therewithal my wandering's limit show.
What shall its date be for the wretched one ?

PROMETHEUS.

Better thou shouldst not learn this thing, than learn.

IO.

Now nay, hide not what I must suffer yet !

PROMETHEUS.

'Tis not that I begrudge to thee this boon.

IO.

Wherefore then linger to declare the whole ?

PROMETHEUS.

Not of ill-will. I fear to wring thine heart.

IO.

O spare not me : such kindness were but gall.

PROMETHEUS.

If thou art fixed, I must speak : hearken thou. 630

CHORUS.

Not yet : let me, too, in the pleasure share.
First, touching her affliction let us learn :
Let herself tell the shipwreck of her life ;
Her sufferings' sequel then be taught of thee.

PROMETHEUS.

Io, 'tis thine to grant this grace to these,
Chiefly, as to the sisters of thy sire ;
Since to beweepe and to bewail one's woes,
Where one is like to win a pitying tear
Of them that hear, is time to profit lost.

Io.

I know not on what plea to say you nay. 640
Lo, in a plain tale all which ye desire,
That shall ye learn, albeit I shame to tell
Whence upon wretched me that tempest swooped
God-sent, that ruining of my human shape.
Long time did visions of the night still haunt
My maiden bower, and ever tempted me
With words alluring—' Maiden greatly blest,
Why linger virgin long, when thou mayst win
Alliance with the highest? Zeus is stung
By thee with love's dart, would in love be joined 650
With thee. Child, spurn not thou from thee the
couch

Of Zeus, but forth to Lerna's deep-grassed mead
Go thou, to folds and neat-stalls of thy sire,
That from its longing Zeus's eye may rest.'
Night after night by visions such as these
Haunted was I, unhappy, till I dared
To tell my sire of those night-thronging dreams.
Then he to Pytho and Dodona sent
Many a messenger, to learn whereby,
By deeds or words, he might propitiate heaven. 660
But these brought back responses darkly veiled
In cloudy speech, in riddles hard to read.

At last to Inachus a clear hest came,
 Plainly commanding, speaking out the word,
 To thrust me forth mine home and fatherland
 To roam an outcast to earth's farthest bourne :
 And if he would not, levin flaming-eyed
 From Zeus should come, destroying all his house.
 Obedient unto Loxias' oracles,
 He drave me forth, against me barred his halls, 670
 Sore loth, both he and I—but Zeus's curb
 Constrained him in his own despite to this.
 Warped straightway were my body and my mind ;
 And horned as ye behold, and venom-stung
 By gadfly keen of fang, with maniac leaps
 On to Kerchneia's limpid stream I rushed,
 And Lerna's spring, while ever dogged my steps
 Argus, the earthborn neatherd, uncontrolled
 In fury, glaring with his myriad eyes.
 But him a sudden doom all unforeseen 680
 Bereft of life, and I still hornet-stung
 By scourge divine am chased from land to land.
 Thou hear'st my story : now if thou canst tell
 What toils remain, declare. For ruth of me
 Speak no smooth lying words ; for I account
 A feignèd tale the foulest of all wrongs.

CHORUS.

Avaunt ! avaunt ! let her draw not near !
 Never I dreamed that a tale should be told
 So strange, so weird—should be told in mine ear,
 Nor that anguish so dread to behold,
 Nor that outrage so hideous to bear 690
 Should harrow my soul with goads of fear.

Woe's me and alas ! ah fate, ah fate !
I shudder to look upon Io's pitiful state !

PROMETHEUS.

Too soon thou moanest, and art full of fear.
Refrain, till thou hast heard the rest withal.

CHORUS.

Speak thou, instruct us : welcome to the stricken
Is clear foreknowledge of their pains to be.

PROMETHEUS.

Your first request have ye obtained of me 700
Lightly, for ye desired to learn of her
A tale of suffering by the sufferer told.
Now hearken to the rest, the miseries
This damsel must endure at Hera's hand.
Thou, Inachus' seed, lay up within thine heart
My words, that thou mayst learn thy journeying's
 bourne.

First toward the sunrise turning thyself hence
Press on o'er plains uneared by any plough ;
So shalt thou reach the nomad Scythians, who
High-borne on wheels in plaited mansions dwell, 710
A nation armed with bows that smite from far.
Draw thou not nigh them ; let thy footsteps swerve
Far from their land to skirt surf-moaning shores.
Next on thy left the iron-craftsmen dwell,
The Chalyb men : of these must thou beware,
A savage folk that welcome strangers not.
The Ruffian River shalt thou reach, well-named :
This cross thou not—right hard to cross it is !—
Ere thou reach Caucasus' self, of mountain-crests

Highest, where that flood belches forth its strength 720
 Clear from his brows. Those star-encountering peaks
 Scale thou, and journey ever to the south,
 Where thou shalt reach the man-abhorring host
 Of Amazons, who shall hereafter dwell
 In Themiskyra by Thermodon's stream,
 Where that fanged jaw of Salmydessian sea,
 Stepdame to ships, greets mariners with hate.
 Thy guides shall these be, gladly be thy guides.
 Thou by the strait gates of the land-locked sea
 Shalt reach Kimmeria's isthmus: with brave heart
 This leave, and cross the firth Mæotian. [730
 The story of thy crossing world-renowned
 Shall ever live with men, and Bosporus
 Shall it be called. So leaving Europe's plain
 Shalt thou reach Asia's mainland—count ye not
 Heaven's King a harsh oppressor in all things
 Alike? A God, for this poor mortal maid
 Lusting, these wanderings loaded he on her!
 A bitter suitor, damsel, for thy bed
 Hast thou found! Lo, the tale thou hast heard but
 now 740
 Seems, to the rest, not worthy a prelude's name.

Io.

Ah me! ah me! alas and alas!

PROMETHEUS.

Again thou wail'st wild-lowing: what wilt thou
 Do, when thou hearest ills that wait untold?

CHORUS.

Ha! wilt thou tell of pains that wait her yet?

PROMETHEUS.

Yea, stormy seas of baleful misery.

Io.

What profits me to live? Why cast I not
Myself down suddenly from this ragged rock,
That, dashed upon the plain, I might be quit
Of all my pains? Oh, better die one death 750
Than suffer misery through all my days!

PROMETHEUS.

How wouldst thou fret to bear mine agonies,
Mine!—seeing I am fated not to die;
For this should be deliverance from woes;
But now no bourne of suffering is ordained
For me, ere Zeus be hurled down from his throne.

Io.

How?—can Zeus be from lordship ever hurled?

PROMETHEUS.

Gladly wouldst thou, I ween, see this befall.

Io.

And wherefore not, being so wronged of Zeus?

PROMETHEUS.

Thou mayst be certified that this is so. 760

Io.

Spoiled of the sceptre shall he be!—by whom?

PROMETHEUS.

Himself by his own counsels wisdom-void.

Io.

In what wise?—tell, if harm be none therein.

PROMETHEUS.

Such bride shall he wed as he yet shall rue.

Io.

Goddess or mortal?—speak, if tell thou mayst.

PROMETHEUS.

Wherefore ask whom? This word may not be said.

Io.

And by this wife is he to be dethroned?

PROMETHEUS.

Yea, mightier than the sire her son shall be.

Io

Is there from this doom no escape for him?

PROMETHEUS.

None, save by me, delivered from my bonds. 770

Io.

Who shall unchain thee, then, in Zeus' despite?

PROMETHEUS.

One of thine own descendants this must be.

Io.

How said'st thou?—son of mine from ills free thee!

PROMETHEUS.

Of generations three and ten the last.

Io.

Hard to interpret is this prophecy.

PROMETHEUS.

Yea—and thine own pains seek not thou to learn.

Io.

Ah, hold not out the boon, and then withdraw !

PROMETHEUS.

Of revelations twain I accord thee one.

Io.

Tell which be they : so grant me choice therein.

PROMETHEUS.

I grant it. Choose—thy residue of pain
Will I tell plainly, or my saviour name. 780

CHORUS.

Of these, on her deign this boon to bestow,
On me that, and refuse me not the tale :
Yea, tell her of her wanderings what remains ;
To me thy saviour name : for this I yearn.

PROMETHEUS

Since ye so crave it, I will not withstand,
But utter forth all whatso ye request.
Io, thy sore-vexed wanderings first I tell ;
Thou grave them on the tablets of thy soul.

When thou hast crossed the mainland-severing strait,
 On to the flame-eyed east where walks the sun [790
 [Unswerving press : first shalt thou reach the land
 Of northern blasts—and then do thou beware
 Their roar down-rushing, lest it snatch thee up
 In tempest-hurricane suddenly whirling thee.]¹
 Fare by the sea's low thunder, till thou win
 Kisthêné's gorgon-haunted plains, where dwell
 The swan-shaped Ancient Ones, the daughters three
 Of Phorkys, sharers in one common eye,
 One tooth, on whom looks never with his rays
 The sun, nor ever the night-pacing moon.
 And hard by these the wingèd Maidens Three,
 The Gorgons serpent-tressed, abhorred of men,
 Whom no man having seen shall breathe again. 800
 Of such grim warder-station thee I warn.
 Now hear another hideous sight to see :
 Beware the keen-fanged never-baying hounds
 Of Zeus, the Gryphons, and the one-eyed host,
 The horsemen Arimaspians, who dwell
 By that gold-gushing fountain, Pluto's stream :
 Draw not nigh these. A far land shalt thou reach,
 A swart race ; by the fountains of the sun
 Dwell they, where Æthiopia's river runs.
 Fare thou along his banks, till thou attain 810
 The cataract, where from the Byblin hills
 Nile poureth his sweet water's hallowed flood.
 He to the land three-sided, named of Nile,
 Shall guide thee, Io, where for thee and thine
 Ordained is a far-distant exile-home.

1. It is probable that some, perhaps a large part, of the account of Io's wanderings has been lost. The bracketed lines are regarded as doubtful.

If aught herein seem dark or hard to read,
Once and again ask : thoroughly learn it all ;
For leisure have I—more than I desire.

CHORUS.

If aught thou hast remaining or passed by
To tell her of her baleful wanderings, 820
Speak. But if all be said, grant us in turn
The grace we ask : thou mindest it perchance.

PROMETHEUS.

Her journeying's full limit hath she heard.
For proof to her that not in vain she hears,
Her hardships ere her coming will I tell,
For token of the truth of these my words.
Lo, the tale's heaviest burden will I drop,
And to thy wandering's end will I pass on.
For when thou cam'st to the Molossian plains,
And drewest nigh steep-ridged Dodona, where 830
Thesprotian Zeus hath throne and oracle,
Where speaking oaks are, portent past belief,
By which thou plainly, nowise riddlingly,
Wast hailed as she that should be glorious bride
Of Zeus—is aught in this to witch thine ear ?—
Thence hornet-frenzied didst thou rush along
The sea-strand track to Rhea's wide gulf, whence
In course back-wandering tempest-driven thou com'st.
And through all days to come that gorge of sea,
Be certified, Ionian shall be named, 840
A record of thy passing to all men.
Take this for sign of my discerning soul
Which doth perceive far more than is revealed.
The rest to you, to her, alike I tell,

Returning to the old track of my tale.
There is a town, Kanopus, on earth's verge,
Hard down by Nile's mouth and his silted bar ;
There shall Zeus make thee whole of mind, by nought
But soothing touch of unappalling hand.
And thou shalt bear, from Zeus' begetting named, 850
Swart Epaphus, who shall the harvests reap
Wide as the broad Nile watereth the land.
The generation fifth from him shall come
Sore loth again to Argos, fifty maids
Fleeing from marriage with their cousins, bonds
Incestuous : these, with spirits ardour-winged,
Like hawks whom doves have left not far behind,
Pursuing brides, pursuit of whom is sin,
Shall come : but God shall grudge them that fair
prey. [860

Them shall Pelasgia shield, their bridegrooms slain
By woman's desperate hand in that night-ambush.
For wives shall spoil of life their several lords,
Dyeing in their hearts' blood the blade two-edged—
May such love-raptures come on all my foes !
But one maid's yearning heart shall charm her hand
From murder of her lord, and dull the edge
Of that fell purpose : she shall choose of twain,
The craven's, not the murderess's name.
Mother of kings in Argos shall she be.
Long were the tale that should set all this forth—870
But from this seed one aweless, bow-renowned,
Shall spring, who from these pains shall set me free.
This prophecy the Titaness rehearsed
To me, my mother Themis, born of old.
The means, the manner, this to tell were long,
Nor shouldst thou profit aught by hearing this.

Io.

Woe's me and alas !
 The convulsions again
 Through my racked limbs pass,
 And with madness my brain
 Is fevered ; the arrow-point forged in no furnace
 envenoms each vein. 880

Knocks my heart at my side
 In fierce frenzied appeal ;
 And mine eyes, they roll wide
 Dizzy-swift as a wheel.
 Wild-raving I drift before madness's blast like a storm-
 driven keel !

And wild and whirling
 Words bursting from me,
 A torrent on-hurling,
 Beat impotently
 On the surge of the inrolling horror, the tide of
 calamity's sea.

[Exit.
 (Str.)

CHORUS.

Wise, of a surety wise was he
 Who in his thoughts first balanced this,
 Who voiced it with his tongue, I wis,
 That wedlock in thine own degree 890

Is best—that he, whose hands for bread
 Must toil, shall covet not with pride
 Of wealth to wed, nor woo a bride
 Whose birth shall scorn the lowly head.

(Ant.)

Never, O Queens of Doom, may ye
Behold me Zeus' mismated mate !
O may no Heaven-abider's state
Stoop down unto my frailty !

For O, I mark with shuddering dread
Yon blasted life, yon loveless maid,
Whose feet through homeless years have
strayed,

By Hera's hate unresting sped. 900

(Epode.)

Dreadless shall wedlock be, so I
May wed mine equal. Heaven forfend
One of the mightier Gods should bend
On me the love-glance none may fly !

None wars with them, but reaps despair
For harvest. Ne'er could I discern
What fate were then mine—whither turn
To flee him who is everywhere ?

PROMETHEUS.

Surely shall Zeus, for all his self-willed pride,
Be humble yet, such wedlock he prepares
To wed, as from his lordship and his throne
To nothingness shall hurl him. Fully then 910
His father Kronos' curse shall be fulfilled,
Uttered when from his ancient throne he fell.
Of Gods none save me only can reveal
To him the escape from these calamities.
I know this, and the manner. Wherefore now

Let him sit strong in trust on thunder-peals,
While fire-breathed lightning quivers in his hand ;
For these shall nought avail to avert his fall
In utter shame, a fall intolerable.
Such grim antagonist he prepares himself 920
Even now, a portent irresistible,
Who shall devise a fiercer flame than levin,
A mightier crash that speaks the thunder dumb,
By whom that sea-scurge, shaker of the land,
Poseidon's trident-spear, shall shivered lie.
So, stumbling on this ruin, shall he learn
How far from lordship's heaven is thralldom's hell.

CHORUS.

'Tis but thy wish, this bodement against Zeus.

PROMETHEUS.

What shall befall, as what I wish, I say.

CHORUS.

Must we look for some master over Zeus ? 930

PROMETHEUS.

Ay, pains than these more grievous shall he know.

CHORUS.

Dost thou not quake to bluster forth such words ?

PROMETHEUS.

What should I fear, whose weird is not to die ?

CHORUS.

But he may double this thine agony.

PROMETHEUS.

E'en let him so : by me is all foreseen.

CHORUS.

Who pay to Nemesis¹ homage, they are wise !

PROMETHEUS.

Cringe, pray, fawn on the tyrant of the hour !
 For me, I reckon of this Zeus less than nought.
 Let him work, tyrannize, his little span, [940
 Even as he will !—short time shall he sway heaven.
 Hush !—yonder Zeus's busy-footed slave
 I spy, this upstart tyrant's underling.
 Surely with some new message hath he come.

Enter Hermes.

HERMES.

Ho, crafty knave, ho, bitterer-souled than gall,
 Felon who gavest Gods' prerogatives
 To creatures of a day—thou thief of fire !
 Allfather bids thee name the marriage-tie
 Which, as thou vauntest, works his fall from power.
 Yea, and no whit in riddles utter this,
 But in plain honest speech. Burden me not, 950
 Prometheus, with a second journey ! Zeus,
 Thou seest, deals not gently with the froward.

PROMETHEUS.

A pompous speech this, crammed with arrogance,
 As well befits the underling of Gods !

1. By refraining from provoking this Goddess, who punished arrogant speech.

Upstarts, ye wield an upstart power : ye think
To dwell in griefless palaces ! Have I
Not known two monarchs cast from yon halls forth ?
And I shall see the third, who ruleth now,
Swiftly in shame fall !—seem I unto thee
To quail and cringe before the upstart Gods ? 960
O far, nay wholly, come I short thereof !
Thou, on the path thou camest speed thee back :
Nought shalt thou learn of all thou seek'st of me.

HERMES.

Yet by such self-will heretofore hast thou
Gained for thyself this anchorage of woes.

PROMETHEUS.

My misery for thy menial servitude
I would not change ; of this be well assured.
Better to be, I wot, thrall to this rock
Than to be courier leal to Father Zeus !
So to hurl scorn at scorners is it meet. 970

HERMES.

Thou seem'st to find thy pleasure in this plight.

PROMETHEUS.

Pleasure !—such pleasure may I see my foes
Finding !—and thee amongst them I account.

HERMES.

How ?—of thy miseries me dost thou accuse ?

PROMETHEUS.

In one word, all the Gods do I abhor,
Who pay my benefits with foulest wrong.

HERMES.

I hear thee raving, desperately crazed.

PROMETHEUS.

Crazed be I, if 'tis madness to hate foes.

HERMES.

Thou wert past bearing, if thy cause should speed.

PROMETHEUS.

Woe's me!

HERMES.

There sounds a word Zeus never knew. 980

PROMETHEUS.

But ever-aging time all lessons teacheth.

HERMES.

Yet wisdom hast thou not yet learnt of him.

PROMETHEUS.

Else had I not deigned answer to this slave.

HERMES.

So thou wilt tell nought that the Sire would know?

PROMETHEUS.

Am I his debtor, to repay his grace?

HERMES.

Thou floutest me, as I were but a child!

PROMETHEUS.

Art not a child, yea, simpler than a child,
In that thou lookest to learn aught from me?
There is nor outrage nor device whereby
Zeus shall constrain me to declare this thing, 990
Ere from my torturing chains he set me free.
Wherefore be his red-blazing levin hurled;
With white-winged snow, with earthquake-thunderings
Let him confound and turmoil heaven and earth.
None of these things shall bend me even to name
By whom he must be hurled from sovereignty.

HERMES.

Bethink thee now, shall this avail thee aught?

PROMETHEUS.

Long since was this foreseen, and this resolved.

HERMES.

Stoop, thou rash fool, stoop, ere it be too late,
To look in the face thy miseries and be wise! 1000

PROMETHEUS.

Deaf as a wave, I weary of thy warnings.
Never dream thou that I will, overawed
By Zeus's purpose, change, be woman-souled,
Or supplicate whom utterly I loathe,
With pitiful-pleading hands that ape the girl,
To loose me from these bonds. I am far therefrom.

HERMES.

Though I talk long, I am like to speak in vain.
Thine heart is melted not, is softened not

By prayers. With teeth clenched on the bit, like colt
New-yoked, thou art restive, fightest with the curb.
Yet thou with impotent strategy dost rebel ; [1010
For self-will in the wight devoid of wit
Is of itself more weak than nothingness.

Yet mark, if thou obey not these my words,
What storm, what threefold surge of woes, where
from

Escape is none, shall smite thee. This rough chasm
Allfather shall with thunder and with flame
Of levin rend, and hide thee 'neath the wrack :
There shall the rock with crookt arm cradle thee.
And when long ages are fulfilled of time, 1020
To light shalt thou come forth. Then Zeus' winged
hound,

The bloody-slaughtering eagle, ravenously
Shall tear thy body into one huge wound,
Stealing on thee, unbidden banqueter,
Daylong, and thy fang-blackened liver gorge.
Look not for limit of this agony,
Till some God rise to take thy pangs on him,
Consenting to the sunless bourne to pass,
To Hades, midst black depths of Tartarus. [1030
Wherefore bethink thee : this is no vaunt framed
To cozen, but in bitter earnest spoken.
The mouth of Zeus knows not to utter lies ;
But every word hath sure fulfilment. Thou
Look heedfully, consider : never deem
Obstinate self-will better than good rede.

CHORUS.

To us doth Hermes seem to speak a word
In season, for he bids thee but put by

Thy self-will, and seek after wise good rede.
Consent : a wise man's shame it is to err.

PROMETHEUS.

Tush ! in his clamorous message is nought that I did
not foreknow. 1040
Yea, that a foe be despitefully used at the hands of a
foe—
Surely herein there is nothing past likelihood won-
drous, I trow.

Therefore on me let his levin two-edgèd and serpent-
ine-curlèd
Flash from his hands : let the welkin in madness of
tempest be whirled,
Crashing with thunder and throes of fierce winds to
the war-grapple hurled.

Let the blast of him rock the foundations of earth till
their roots be laid bare,
Turmoil the surge of the sea till the torn surf whiten
the air,
Storm through the peace of the skies and the paths
where the stars' feet fare.

Ay, let him swing up my frame, and to Tartarus hurl
from the day 1050
Down into darkness, through whirlpits resistless of
fate swept aye—
Yet shall he deal me not death, his omnipotence
cannot slay.

HERMES.

Ha, but such purpose, such moods, as the outcry of
madness they ring
In mine ears! In the doom that this fellow will
choose, doth he lack anything
Of folly?—the reins on the neck of mere frenzy doth
he not fling?

But in any wise ye, who in all his affliction afflict you,
away!
Flee from the place of his torment afar with such
speed as ye may, 1060
Ere the roar of the thunder relentless have blasted
reason's ray.

CHORUS.

Talk thou not thus! Far other be thy plea,
If thou wouldst have me heed, not this!
A loathing unendurable to me
Thy misplaced counsel is!

How canst thou bid me play the craven's part?
With him, whatever horror fate
Foredooms, will I endure: fixed is my heart,
For traitors do I hate.
There is no stain, no leprosy
Of soul, with spitting so abhorred of me! 1070

HERMES.

Remember, then—I warn, and ye refuse.
When doom's gin snaps, be no blame thrown
On fortune: say not, 'We are hurled of Zeus
To anguish unforeknown!'

Yourselves yourselves thrust down : all wittingly
 Shall ye be tangled in that snare,
 And from no sudden ambush forth shall fly
 The toils of doom's despair.

[*Exit.*

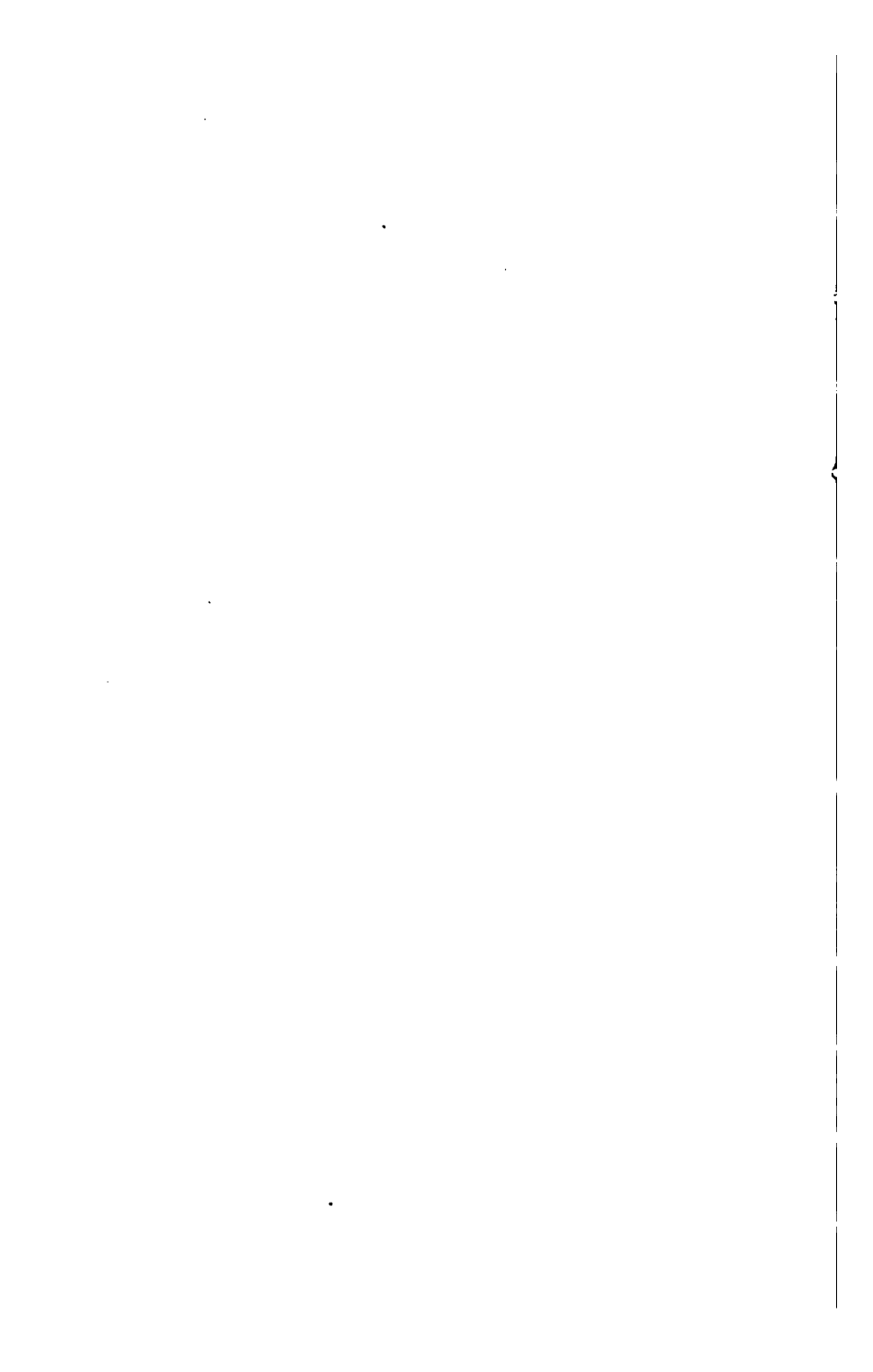
PROMETHEUS.

Ha ! not in promise at last, but in deed, swayeth
 earth to and fro ! 1080
 Thunders roll by me with crashings that burst from
 abysses below !
 Out of a fiery furnace the flickering lightnings glow !

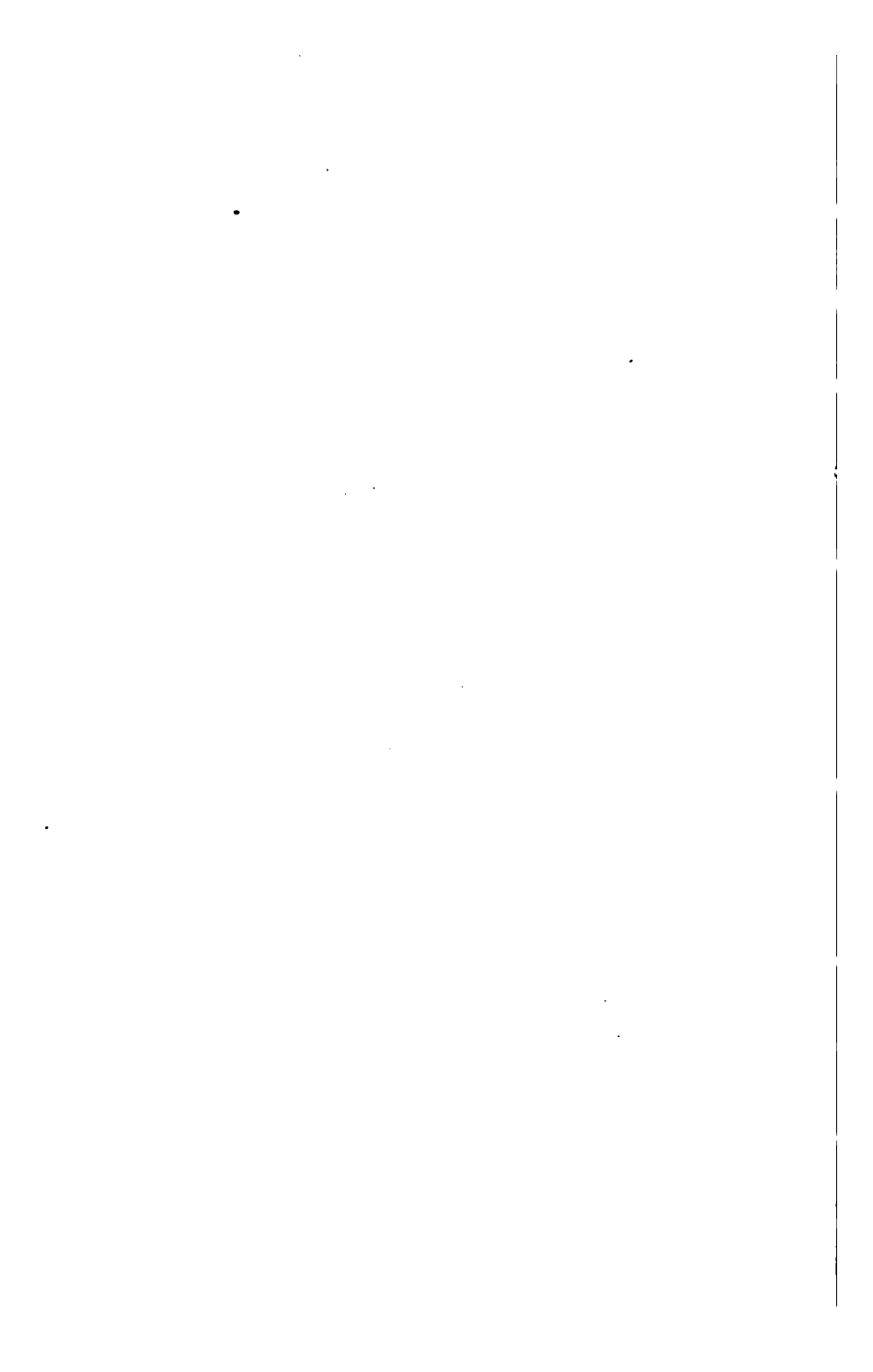
Whirlwinds in spires are uptossing the dust : in
 tumultuous array
 Blasts of all winds are onleaping to grapple and pant
 in the fray :
 Blent with the sea is the welkin, a turmoil of vapour
 and spray !

With such swoop upon me comes the stroke that the
 terrors of Zeus doth reveal. 1090
 Earth-mother's majesty ! Æther, wherethrough doth
 the world's light wheel !
 See me, what outrage of wrong I endure !—unto you
 I appeal !

[*The earth is rent asunder, and
 the rock to which Prometheus
 is chained descends into the
 chasm.*]



THE SUPPLIANT MAIDENS.



ARGUMENT.

HEREIN is told how one of the prophecies of Prometheus came to pass. For Danaus and Ægyptus, descendants of Io, were brothers, and the fifty sons of Ægyptus were fain to wed by force the fifty daughters of Danaus. But to these that marriage seemed unholy and hateful, and they fled from Egypt across the sea to the land of Argos, whence Io, the mother of their race, had come ; and thither the sons of Ægyptus pursued them.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

DANAUS.

PELASGUS, *king of Argos.*

HERALD, *servant of the sons of Ægyptus.*

CHORUS, *consisting of the fifty daughters of Danaus.*
Argive Men, guards of king Pelasgus: Egyptians,
attendants of the Herald.

SCENE :—Before a temple beside the sea, near to the
city of Argos.

NOTE ON THE TEXT.

I HAVE, in translating this play, followed, almost without exception, the revised text of Professor Tucker, the value of whose labours to students of Æschylus it would not be easy to overrate. Though, of course, no one can claim that we have here the original text of Æschylus recovered at last, yet, such is Professor Tucker's feeling for true poetry, and so keen and clear is his dramatic insight, that one may well believe that if the great dramatist were, in Hades, presented with this text and the old one, and required to choose by which of these he would be known to modern readers, he would, in such a dilemma, unhesitatingly prefer that of the brilliant Melbourne scholar.

THE SUPPLIANT MAIDENS.

CHORUS.

ZEUS, God of the suppliant, gracious-eyed
Look down on our band, which hath sailed from
the land

Where the mouths of Nile are fringed with the wide
Dunes of the sea-blown sand.

From the land of Zeus into exile we fled,
Whose pastures march with the Syrian border,—
Exiles, yet not by a nation's order

Outlawed, as when innocent blood hath been shed :
Nay, but ourselves into banishment drave us,
Who with sons of Ægyptus, while flight might
save us

10

From impious union, abhorred to be wed.

Yea, chief in our counsel was Danaus, even our father,
And in our revolt, for herein did he cast the die
That of two afflictions was this to be chosen the
rather,

O'er the salt sea-surges in headlong haste to fly,
And to speed to the land of Argos, whence our line
Drew its beginning, since that soft touch divine
On the breese-tormented heifer descended,
And breathed on her Zeus, and her wanderings
ended.

Unto what land then of hearts more kind 20
Could we come, than to this, who bear in our hands
For weapons nought save the suppliants' wands
With the soft wool twined ?

O city, O land, O sunlit waters,
Gods throned in the heights, Gods homed under earth,
Who for wrong take vengeance in sternest fashion,
O Saviour Zeus, who wardest the hearth
Of righteous dealers, your suppliant daughters

Receive with the breath of this land's compassion !
And the swarm of the men with the soul of the
brute, 30

Of Ægyptus begotten—ere these set foot
On this land moulded of silt outpoured,
Oh drive them afar in their bark swift-oared
To the deep ; and with waves there maddening under
The flails of tempest, with lightning, with thunder,
With winds rain-burdened that tear asunder
The sea's white lips, be they met, and therein
Go down to destruction, or ever they win
The couch of their kindred, who loathed alliance
With these who usurp it in Law's defiance. 40

(*Str. 1*)

Now call I to help us from far oversea
Fate's child, for I cry on
That steer begotten of Zeus, even thee
O flower-cropping scion
Of the Heifer, first mother of all our line,
Who of old time received thee
From on high, and Epaphus named, for a sign
Of the breath of Zeus, and the hand divine
Wherefrom she conceived thee.

(Ant. 1)

From the meads where of yore did our first mother
graze 50

As I cry, unsealing
Dim records of sorrows of far-off days,
He shall hear mine appealing :
I will tell him of all mine afflictions, the new—
Showing manifest token—
And the former wrongs, which are like thereunto ;
And, how strange soe'er, he shall know how true
Be the words I have spoken.

(Str. 2)

If a bird-seer, a son of the land, be hereby,
And hear my pitiful wail,
In his fancy's ear shall it sound as the cry 60
Of Tereus' bride ringing mournfully,
Of the hawk-chased nightingale.

(Ant. 2)

For under the spring-leaves prisoned in gloom,
Of her homeless life doth she plain,
And she weaves with the story her dead child's doom
Who died by her hand—oh, the son of her womb
By the wrath of his mother was slain !

(Str. 3)

So I, I too, in love with sorrow,
In my mourning Ionian measures am keeping,
As I furrow the cheek that once could borrow 70
Rich rounded softness from sunny Nile,
As I weary a heart unused to weeping :
And I gather the blossoms of grief the while,
And I brood on the fear that hath whispered me,
Since I fled from the land o'er the misty sea—
'What if here there be none to champion thee ?'

(Ant. 3)

O Gods of our race, I beseech you, hearken !
 See to it ye that the wrong be righted :
 Forbid ye that hot young lust should darken
 The eyes of justice, and work its desire.
 Cause none save lawful troth to be plighted : 80
 Let your wrath against tyranny burn as a fire !
 Hear !—even when men be in war hard pressed,
 Is the War-god's altar for fleers distressed
 A refuge, through awe of the Gods ever-blest.

(Str. 4).

That ancient saying declared aright—
 ' The purpose of Zeus no searcher may trace.'
 To him all lieth bare in his own fierce light,
 Though he shroud it wholly in blackness of night
 From the prying eyes of the earth-born race.

(Ant. 4)

The thing that Zeus by his nod hath decreed, 90
 Though ye wrestle therewith, it shall ne'er be o'er-
 thrown ;

For through tangled ways and shadowy lead
 The paths of the purpose that none may impede,
 By no eye to be scanned, by no wisdom known.

(Str. 5)

And he hurls from their hope's high tower
 Mortals to ruin of night,
 Nor against him availeth the power
 Of the high Gods' effortless might : 100
 Yea, pride, though enthroned in the stainless heavens,
 shall he straightway smite.

(Ant. 5)

Let him look on the violence of men,
 How for lust of us burgeoneth

The old stock into leafage again
And blossom of froward breath,
Spurred on by a frenzied intent, a delusion whose
issue is death. 110

(*Str.* 6)

Thus in untaught and tuneless litanies,
Laments now shrilling high, now moaning low—
A very death-dirge where the hot tears flow—
I chant, while yet alive, mine obsequies.
O Apian highlands, I implore you—
Mine alien speech, ah, pardon ye!—
Rending my Tyrian veil, before you 120
Once and again I bow the knee.

(*Ant.* 6)

With instant sacrifice men pay the vow,
When all proves well, when lulls the blast of
death.

But oh, what gloom of storm encountereth
Me?—whither shall the wild surge sweep me now?
O Apian highlands, I implore you—
Mine alien speech, ah, pardon ye!—
Rending my Tyrian veil, before you 130
Once and again I bow the knee.

(*Str.* 7)

O yea, the oar and the house of tree
Whose rope-knit beams are a fence from the sea,
Over stormless waters hath wafted me on,
And I murmur not at the service done.
But O, may the Sire who beholdeth all
Here grant that a gracious issue befall,
That the child of the bride august 140
Be unstained, that I be not thrust
Into thralldom unto the tyrant's lust!

(Ant. 7)

O Zeus' pure Daughter, vouchsafe to turn
Thine eyes upon me, unto theeward who yearn ;
Thou who guardest the doors of thine hallowed fane,
In thy fulness of might do thou restrain
The spoiler's hand, and, a maiden thou,
Deliver thy maiden suppliant now, 150
That the child of the bride august
Be unstained, that I be not thrust
Into thralldom unto the tyrant's lust !

(Str. 8)

But if these help not, we will go
To the mansions abhorred of the sun,
To the Zeus of the realms below
Who hath welcome and rest to bestow
Upon each world-wearied one.
Thitherward with our boughs will we fare,
For the noose shall our way prepare 160
If the Gods of Olympus will grant not our prayer.
O Io, a dread retribution was thine
From the sleuth-hound hate of the wrath divine !
Too well do I know it, the spite
Of the brides of the Lords of Light,
How born of the rage of the blast are the wings of
the tempest's might.

(Ant. 8)

How shall Zeus, if our prayer be denied,
At the bar of Justice plead,
If he thrusteth with scorning aside 170
The child of his heifer-bride,
The seed of his very seed ?—
If now he averteth his eye
From his children's helpless cry ?—

O nay, of a surety he hears from on high !
O Io, a dread retribution was thine
From the sleuth-hound hate of the wrath divine !
Too well do I know it, the spite
Of the brides of the Lords of Light,
How born of the rage of the blast are the wings of
the tempest's might.

DANAUS.

Daughters, be wary. Hither have ye won
Through trusty pilotage of your wary sire.
Now, being on land, take forethought as I bid,
And grave my words on tablets of the mind.
I see dust, voiceless herald of a host 180
Now, now their shrieking axle-naves I hear
I see a shielded host and flickering spears,
With war-steeds and with archèd battle-cars.
Haply the rulers of the land draw nigh
Themselves to see things told of messengers.
Whether for peace they come, or with grim wrath
Whetted, this warrior host that sweepeth on,
Daughters, 'twere best in any wise ye sat
Hard by this mound of Gods' of Festival.
Stronger than towers be altars, adamant shields. 190
Nay, go with all speed : boughs of suppliance
White-wreathed, the wands of Zeus the Merciful,
Hold ye in your left hands in solemn form.
With pity-stirring plaints that tell your need
Answer the strangers, as fits refugees.
Show how your flight of no blood-guilt arose.
Let bold looks not attend your utterance ;
And in your brows of chastened modesty,
And quiet eyes, be there no wantonness.

Nor forward be nor laggard in your speech ; 200
For this land's folk be swift to take offence.
See that ye be submiss, as aliens, needy,
And outcast : bold lips misbecome the weak.

CHORUS.

Father, thy wary rede I warily heed ;
And I will ward in memory's treasury
Thy wise behests. May Zeus our Sire look down !

DANAUS.

Yea, may he look down with a gracious eye !

CHORUS.

I am fain to seat me suppliant straight by thee.

DANAUS.

Dally not now ; lay hold on means of help.

CHORUS.

Zeus, pity our afflictions ere we die ! 210

DANAUS.

If he will, bright shall be the end hereof.

CHORUS.

[Bright is yon sun—I make the omen mine¹ !]

DANAUS.

Call therefore upon yonder child of Zeus.

CHORUS.

We call upon the Sun-god's saviour beams.

1. Line inserted conjecturally, to connect the sense.

DANAUS.

And pure Apollo, exiled once from heaven.

CHORUS.

He hath known our fate, and he may pity us.

DANAUS.

In ruth and kindness may he stand by us !

CHORUS.

On whom beside of these Gods shall I call ?

DANAUS.

Lo, here the trident of the Isthmian King.

CHORUS.

Well did he speed us ; well may he receive !

DANAUS.

[220

Next, Hermes, fashioned as in Hellene cult.

CHORUS.

Now may he herald freedom's dawn for us !

DANAUS.

This common altar of all heaven's lords
Revere. On holy ground, like flight of doves
Settle, in dread of hawks like-plumed with you,
Your kin, your foes, fain to pollute the race.
How can the bird that preys on bird be pure ?
And how should he who ravisheth from her sire
A bride, be pure ? He after death, in Hades,
Who did this shall not be arraigned in vain !

There, too, as men say, sits another Zeus 230
In the last judgment over dead men's sins.
Take heed, and to yon ruler answer make
Such as shall gain your cause fair victory.

Enter the King of Argos.

KING.

From what land comes this throng in alien garb,
In robes barbaric, with fine linen decked ?
How shall we name you ? Not of Argos are
Your woman-vests—nay, all Greece knows them not.
And how ye dared to come unto this land,
With neither heralds, bond-friends, neither guides—
To come thus boldly—this amazeth me. 240
In sooth, green branches, after suppliants' wont,
Ye have laid before our Gods of Festival.
Hellas here only unperplexed divines :
Of all beside were one constrained to guess,
If plain speech shall not certify to us.

CHORUS.

Truth hast thou spoken touching our attire.
But shall I as plain citizen speak to thee,
Or spokesman of the sacred wand, or king ?

KING.

As touching this, make answer unafraid.
Know ye, earth-born Palaichthon's son am I, 250
Pelagus, and the ruler of this land.
And the Pelasgian race, from me their king
Named fitly, reap the harvests of her soil.
And over all the tract wherethrough doth flow
Pure Strymon toward the setting sun, I rule.

My borders march with the Perrhæbian soil,
Stretch beyond Pindus, nigh Chaonia's folk,
And to Dodona's hills. The heaving sea
Is my realm's limit : thus far spreads my sway.
But this plain, this, the Apian land itself, 260
Gat from a hero-leech long since its name.
For Apis from Naupactus oversea
Came : he, the healer-seer, Apollo's son,
This land from man-devouring monsters cleansed,
Which earth, with taint of long-spilt blood defiled,
Brought forth, a stern stepmother she to us,
A serpent-brood, fell haunters of our home.
Apis for these wrought remedies, by herbs
Shredded, and charms, to Argos' deep content,
And earned for fee remembrance in our prayers. 270
Now that thou hast my story, tell in turn
The lineage thou dost boast ; and plainly speak :
My city loveth not a tedious tale.

CHORUS.

Short is the tale and clear :—of Argive race
We name us, of the Heifer's hero-line.
All this my words shall yet confirm for truth.

KING.

The tale ye tell sounds past belief to me,
Strangers, that this our Argive blood is yours !
Far more to Libyan women are ye like,
And nowise to the daughters of our land. 280
Mother of such brood Nile might be, meseems ;
Yea, or the Cyprian mint-mark to the life
Thus husband-craftsmen stamp on female forms.
Such were the Nomad maids whereof I hear

That upon camel-pillions mounted ride,
Neighbours unto the Æthiopian land,
Or those unmanned flesh-eating Amazons :—
Bare ye bows, I had surely likened you
To these. Teach me, that I may better know
How Argive blood and lineage can be thine. 290

CHORUS.

The keys of Hera's fane did Io keep
Of yore, say they, in this your Argive land ?

KING.

Yea, verily ; wide-spread the rumour is.

CHORUS.

Is't told that Zeus was thrilled with love for her ?

KING.

Yea, nor from Hera was their dalliance hid.

CHORUS.

How ended then this strife between our Lords ?

KING.

To a heifer Argos' Goddess changed the maid.

CHORUS.

Nor to the fair-horned Heifer came Zeus nigh ? 300

KING.

Yea, say they, in fit likeness of a bull.

CHORUS.

What then did she, the stubborn wife of Zeus ?

KING.

The all-seeing Thing she set to ward the Heifer.

CHORUS.

What all-beholding neatherd meanest thou ?

KING.

Argus, the child of earth, whom Hermes slew.

CHORUS.

What for the hapless Heifer wrought she more ?

KING.

The cattle-goading breese that gave no rest.

CHORUS.

Called Oestrus of the dwellers by the Nile.

KING.

Thither, o'er all that long course, was she chased ?

CHORUS.

Yea, all thy tale thus far accords with mine. 310

KING.

Came she withal to Memphis and Canopus ?

CHORUS.

Yea, Zeus' hand touched her : so he gendered issue.

KING.

What heifer's son proclaims him child of Zeus ?

CHORUS.

Epaphus, named from *laying on of hands*.

KING.

And who thereafter sprang from Epaphus ?

CHORUS.

Libya, who reaped the chief of earth's increase.

KING.

What scion nam'st thou next, to Libya born ?

CHORUS.

Belus : two sons he had, the one my sire.

KING.

Name me his name, who clothed with wisdom sits.

CHORUS.

Danaus, whose brother-king hath fifty sons. 320

KING.

Disclose withal his name : grudge not to speak.

CHORUS.

Ægyptus. Knowing now mine ancient line,
Stand forth to champion Argos' exile-train.

KING.

Partners in this land from of old ye seem
To me. How dared ye from your fathers' home
To flee ?—what bolt of ill-chance fell on you ?

CHORUS.

Pelasgian King, man's woes are diverse-hued ;
Nowhere shalt thou find trouble's plumage one.
Who had believed that in this strangest flight
To Argos would her ancient kindred sail 330
Shrinking with loathing from the marriage-yoke ?

KING.

What supplication make ye to our Gods,
Say'st thou, with boughs new-plucked and wreathed
with white ?

CHORUS.

That I be made not thrall to Ægyptus' seed.

KING.

For hate of them, or count ye it a sin ?

CHORUS.

Nay, who would buy them near kin for their lords ?

KING.

At least a man's house gaineth strength thereby.

CHORUS.

Ay—with the first cloud lightly comes divorce !

KING.

What then ? how, touching you, shall I be righteous ?

CHORUS.

Yield us not at Ægyptus' sons' demand. 340

KING.

A hard request, to face a sudden war !

CHORUS.

Yet Justice doth maintain her champion's cause.

KING.

If from the first she have espoused one's cause.

CHORUS.

Revere thy ship of state thus suppliance-wreathed !

KING.

I tremble, seeing the altar shaded thus.

CHORUS.

Dread is the wrath of Zeus the Suppliants' God !

(*Str. 1*)

O son of Palaichthon, incline thine ear unto me !

Gracious, O King of Pelasgians, let thine heart be.

Behold how, a suppliant panic-struck exile, I flee

Like a heifer that wolves have chased to a precipice-
height,

350

Where she runs to and fro, and, setting her hope in
his might,

Lows to the herdman, as telling her grievous plight.

KING.

I see our gathered Gods of Festival

Who, wreathed with fresh boughs, seem to nod assent.

May this, our guests' cause, bring not bane to us,

Nor, from things unforeseen, unwarded, rise

Strife to our state : our Argos needs not this.

CHORUS.

(Ant. 1)

Ah, may she see that it bring no hurt unto you,
Even Themis, the Goddess to whom all suppliants
sue, 360
Daughter of Zeus who allotteth to all their due!
Let thine old experience learn from the young this
day:
Respecting the suppliant, shalt thou true sacrifice pay,
Yea, the best that the pure of heart on the altars can
lay.

KING.

'Tis not at mine hearth suppliant thus ye crouch.
If o'er the whole state hangs pollution's ban,
Her folk must all work out the remedy.
Therefore no promise will I pledge you, ere
With all my people I commune thereon.

CHORUS.

(Str. 2)

Nay, but 'tis thou art the city, the commonwealth
thou, and as lord, 370
Lord above question, the altars, the hearths of the
land, dost thou ward;
Thou by thy nod undisputed, and thou on a throne
none dare
Challenge, decidest all matters—thou then of pollution
beware!

KING.

Pollution!—let it light upon my foes!
But how unharmed to aid you I know not.
Yet 'twere ungracious to reject your prayers.

In a great strait am I—fear haunts my soul
To risk my fate—to do or not to do. 380

CHORUS. (Ant. 2)

Think upon him who keeps watch from on high, and
who guards the oppressed
Crouched at the hearth of their neighbours, who win
not the due of the guest.
Surely when Zeus for the sake of his suppliant is
angered, his wrath
Not for the wails of the guilty one punished shall
swerve from its path.

KING.

Yet, if o'er you Aegyptus' sons have power
By law, in claiming you, as next of kin,
Who then would dare oppose himself to this ?
According to thy land's laws must thou plead 390
That these o'er thee have no authority.

CHORUS. (Str. 3)

Ah, let me never fall beneath the might
Of tyrant man ! Nay, rather will I fly
Far as the stars can guide me in my flight
From wedlock-rape. Be justice thine ally,
And give thou sentence righteous in God's sight.

KING.

Hard is decision : choose not me for judge.
Already have I said—for all my power,
Without my folk I cannot do this thing.
Ne'er may they say, if aught untoward hap, 400
'Thou honouredst strangers unto Argos' ruin !'

CHORUS. (Ant. 3)

Zeus sees all this—and we are Zeus's kin—
He holds the balance true, apportioning
To men their fruits of righteousness or sin.
When thus the scales be equal-poised, O King,
Why fearest thou to do me right herein?

KING.

Yea, need there is that deep reflection's eye,
Keen-seeing, like a salvage-diver, plunge
Down to the depths, nor search with wandering gaze,
That without scathe—to Argos most of all, 410
Then to myself—all this may end in good,
That neither war may seize upon the prey,
Nor, by surrendering you thus suppliant-crouched
At the Gods' feet, we bring to haunt our homes
That all-destroying God, the Avenging Sprite,
Who even in Hades leaves the dead not free.
Think ye there needs no safety-searching thought?

CHORUS. (Str. 1)

Yea, think well: prove thee our defender,
As right and fear of God demand.
The exile driven from that far land 420
In god-curst banishment—ah, lend her
The shield of thy strong hand!

(Ant. 1)

See me not from the place of session
Of many a God haled ruthlessly;
For all this land is ruled of thee.
Beware heaven's wrath: grant not possession
To tyrannous men of me!

(Str. 2)

Bear not to see, in Justice' scorning,
 Thy suppliant from yon statues led, 430
 As men hale steeds bright-frontleted,
 Nor hands laid on my robes' adorning
 Of cunning-broidered thread.

(Ant. 2)

Know, whatsoe'er thy sentence, yonder
 Stern Justice waits : thy sons one day
 Such measure as ye mete shall pay.
 Thou on Zeus' sentence therefore ponder,
 And let the right have sway.

KING.

I have pondered : on one rock of twain we are driven :—
 We cannot choose but have stern war with these
 Or those : 'tis fixed and clinched as bolt-gript hull 440
 Of ship by windlass braced beside the sea.
 Nowhere is haven screened from blasts of woe.
 If goods in tempest have been jettisoned,
 With more, by grace of Zeus the Lord of Wealth,
 A new ship, greater yet, full-fraught may be :
 And though the tongue have shot out bitter words,
 Yet speech may find a healing balm for speech,
 Soothing for hearts, and countercharm for wounds.
 But shedding blood of kin !—to avert this curse
 Much sacrifice must flame, and victims bleed 450
 Many to many Gods, to heal the offence.
 For mischief, sure, I am launched upon this feud,
 Yet would of ills false prophet liefer be
 Than true. May better than my fears befall !

CHORUS.

Of all my pleas for mercy, hear the end.

KING.

I hear : say on, it shall not pass unweighed.

CHORUS.

Sashes we have and zones that gird our robes.

KING.

What then ?—these are but what beseemeth maids.

CHORUS.

Know then, of these we have found a fair device.

KING.

Speak : to what utterance will ye give voice ? 460

CHORUS.

If thou wilt give us no assuring pledge—

KING.

What shall this zone-device achieve for you ?

CHORUS.

With tablets strange these statues shall they deck.

KING.

Ye speak in riddles—tell out your intent.

CHORUS.

Upon these Gods to hang ourselves forthright.

KING.

I hear a threat hath whips to scourge my heart !

CHORUS.

Thou seest now : I have given thee vision clear.

KING.

On every hand most desperate is our plight :
Ills like a river come on me in flood.
On trouble's sea unsounded, hard to pass, 470
Where haven is none from evils, am I launched.
For if I satisfy not this your claim,
Pollution, passing range of speech, ye threaten.
If I against your kin, Aegyptus' sons,
Try battle's issue, ranged before our walls,
How is it not a bitter price to pay,
That men for women stain their soil with blood ?
Yet must we dread the wrath of Zeus the Lord
Of Suppliants : man's chief fear is fear of him.
Thou then, O ancient father of these maids, 480
Straight in thine arms take branches like to these,
And lay on other altars of the Gods
Of Argos, that all citizens may see
This sign of suppliance. Look ye speak no word
Of me : this people love to blame their lords.
Yea, and perchance some pitying will see these,
And loathe the insolence of the suitor crew.
So to you kindlier might my people be ;
For all men's hearts warm to the weaker side.

DANAUS.

This we account a prize of passing worth, 490
To have found a merciful god-fearing friend.
Yet send with us attendants, Argive men,
Guides, that the altars of your city's Gods

Which front the fanes that rise to ward your homes,
We so may find, and safely through your streets
May pass: our outward guise is not as yours;
For diverse Nile's and Inachus' nurslings are.
Beware lest over-confidence breed fear.
Ere now have men slain friends through ignorance.

KING.

Go with him, henchmen: well the stranger speaks.
Guide him to Argos' altars, seats of Gods. [500
And at the crossways see ye babble not
How to Gods' hearths ye lead the seafarer.
[*Exit Danaus.*

CHORUS.

Him hast thou told: so bidden let him go.
But I?—what heart's assurance giv'st thou me?

KING.

Leave here the boughs, for token of your distress.

CHORUS.

'Lo, thus I leave them at thy word and sign.

KING.

Now freely walk on this smooth temple-lawn.

CHORUS.

How shall a lawn unconsecrate protect me?

KING.

To ravin-fowl we will not yield thee up. 510

CHORUS.

How, if to foes more fell than venomous snakes?

KING.

Nay, courteous speech unto a courteous host!

CHORUS.

No marvel if faint heart make fretful speech.

KING.

Yet should the awe of kings all else transcend.

CHORUS.

Nay, cheer me thou by word and deed of hand!

KING.

Go to, not long thy sire shall leave thee lone.
 To assemble now the people of my land
 I pass, to win their good will unto you :
 And I will teach thy sire fit words to speak.
 Wherefore abide here, and with prayers beseech 520
 This country's Gods to grant your hearts' desire :
 And I will hence to bring all this about.
 Suasion and prospering fortune go with us!

[Exit.

CHORUS.

(Str. 1)

O King of Kings, o'er the Blessèd who reignest
 Most blessèd, O Zeus high-throned in bliss,
 Over powers supreme who thy power maintainest,
 Hear our petition, vouchsafe us this :—
 Thrust back with loathing the tyrannous reiver,
 And his pest black-hulled, may the sea receive her
 Deep down in his purple-dark abyss! 530

(Ant. 1)

In thy daughters' cause, that ancient-hoary
Legend regard thou, the tale of our race :
Call to remembrance our mother's story,
Of her who in thine eyes once found grace.
Recall the touch that her wanderings ended.
From thee through her even we are descended :
This land is our olden dwelling-place.

(Str. 2)

My feet on the ancient print have I planted
Of my mother, the pasture wherein, as she grazed
Mid its flowers, by the myriad eyes was she haunted,
Till, breese-tormented and horror-crazed, [540
She fled, and through many a tribe of mortals
Passed, and betwixt the great sea-portals,
Cleaving the billows asunder, she went
From continent on unto continent.

(Ant. 2)

On through the land of Asia flying
She sped, through the Phrygian pastures of sheep,
Unto Teuthras' city mid Mysians lying, [550
And the glens 'twixt the Lydian hill-clefts deep :
O'er Cilician heights and Pamphylian rushing,
By rivers from fountains perennial gushing,
She won unto Aphrodité's home
Corn-bounteous, the land of the deep rich loam.

(Str. 3)

And she came, to and fro by the dart-goad driven
Of the neatherd winged, to the emerald-glowing
Lea-lands fed by the snows of heaven,
Whereover the might of Typho is flowing, 560
To the waters of Nile by disease untainted,

While with anguish of shame her spirit fainted
Frenzied with pangs that of Hera were given.

(*Ant.* 3)

And the folk dwelling then in the land of the River
Looked on the Thing, half-brute, half-human,
And with pallid fear did the hearts of them shiver
To behold that weird sight, heifer-woman. 570
And who was it then that bestowed assuaging
Upon Io the homeless-driven, whom the raging
Gadfly-venom tormented ever ?

(*Str.* 4)

Zeus was it, the master of life unfailing ;
For the cry of her anguish came into his ears ;
And the might of Zeus over pain prevailing,
And his breathings divine, stilled anguish and
fears ;
And she shed the sorrowing shame of tears.
She received his burden, a son she bare 580
Without flaw, as the lips of truth declare,

(*Ant.* 4)

Yea, a son ever-blest while the long years fly on.
And the whole land cried, ' This babe indeed
Of Zeus the inbreather of life is the scion !
Who else from the malice of Hera had freed
Her victim ? O yea, it is Zeus's seed.'
Our lineage too mayst thou soothly name,
Seeing we our descent from that Epaphus claim.

(*Str.* 5)

Unto whom of the Gods should ascend mine ap-
pealing 590
So fitly, for all his righteous dealing ?
The branch of thy planting are we—O aid us,

Our Father! O King, thine hands have made us.
Hear, thou whose thoughts are from times eternal,
Zeus, blesser and blessed, Creator supernal!

(*Ant. 5*)

Thou art throned where the lordship of none thou
obeyest :

Beneath no stronger thy sceptre thou swayest :

None sitteth on high unto whom thou, brooking

His rule, art with reverence upward looking :

What purpose soever thy spirit conceiveth,

The deed, as the word, thine hand achieveth.

Enter Danaus.

DANAUS.

Take heart, my daughters! Good is the decree 600
Of all the folk in full assembly met.

CHORUS.

Hail, ancient, dearest harbinger to me!

Tell only whither their decision tends—

What act comes of the folk's imperial vote?

DANAUS.

With one voice have the Argive men decreed,

So that mine agèd heart waxed young again.

For with the raised right hands of all the folk

The air was horrent as they made this law—

That we within the land shall sojourn free,

Inviolatè, to be by none torn hence—

610

That none, or citizen or alien,

Hence hale us. If he make assay of force,

Then, of the citizens who helps us not,

Dishonoured shall he be and banishèd.

And with this pleading in our cause prevailed
 Pelasgia's king :—' I warn you, let our state
 Never feed fat the Lord of Suppliants' grudge
 For aftertime ! Twofold pollution, camped
 Before our walls, to avenge these stranger-kinsfolk,
 Shall batten insatiate on our agonies.' 620
 Hearing these words, the Argives, waiting not
 The summons, voted that it so should be.
 Pelasgia's king by subtle turn of speech
 Swayed them, 'tis true—but the issue Zeus o'erruled.

CHORUS.

O come ye, o'er the Argives utter we
 Prayers for good things which are their good
 deeds' due :
 Let Zeus, the Strangers' King, look down on all,
 and bring
 Our lips' thank-offering to fulfilment true,
 And speed unto the goal all prosperously. 630
 (Str. 1)

Now, Sons of Zeus, give ear to mine outpouring
 Of offerings of prayer.
 Ne'er may the War-fiend raise his shout upsoaring
 O'er yon Pelasgian town, with murderous-roaring
 Flames, to hush dances there—
 Grim reaper he who human lives is reaping
 In tilth-lands not his own !—
 Sentence so kind they passed, by suppliants' weep-
 ing 640
 Moved : to this piteous flock in Zeus's keeping
 Compassion have they shown.

(Ant. 1)

Not for those man-brutes have they given decision,
Slighting the woman's side.
Upward to Zeus they looked ; they saw in vision
The Avenging Sprite, high-perched, in pride's de-
rision, 650

On sinful roofs of pride,
Defiling them—a burden heavy-weighing !
These reverence and befriend
The seed of Zeus who come for succour praying.
So from pure altars shall their wrath-allaying
Prayers to the Gods ascend.

(Str. 2)

Therefore from lips by boughs of suppliance shaded
Let prayer soar yearningly
That never by dispeopling plague invaded
This nation's burg may be, 660
Nor civil strife lay low her children, steeping
Her soil with murder-shower,
Ne'er fall her youth beneath war's sickle sweeping,
Nor come the Love-queen's love, fell Arés, reaping
Untimely her manhood's flower !

(Ant. 2)

And may the altars where grey elders gather
Blaze with gifts goodly and great,
Petitioning of Zeus the mighty Father 670
Fair governance for the state,
Praying the most high Guest-ward that he give
her
The old laws of righteousness.
We ask that earth may yield fresh increase ever :
May Artemis the Archer-queen deliver
Women in travail-stress.

(Str. 3)

No murder-havoc enter there, that rendeth
A state in twain, that mars 680
The dance and song, that arms the God who
sendeth

Tears and intestine wars.
The venom'd swarms of fell diseases linger
Far from those happy ones ;
And may the God Lykeian still be bringer
Of blessing to her sons.

(Ant. 3)

Zeus grant her soil bear harvest-wealth unceasing
Season by season still ; 690
Her forward-grazing herds be aye increasing.
All good the Gods fulfil !
And may the bards her altar-fires enringing
Peal out the hymn of praise,
And lips of purity to lyre-strings singing
Thanksgiving-chants upraise.

(Str. 4)

May a wise ruler's providence far-seeing
Stand faithful sentinel
Over the folk, whence all power hath its being,
That peace be warded well. 700
And, keeping pact with aliens, righteous dealing
Unforced may they accord,
Ere, to arbitrament of steel appealing,
They seek stern war's award.

(Ant. 4)

And to the Gods who have the land in keeping
Still may they homage pay
After their fathers' wont, with smoke upleaping
From altars wreathed with bay.

Yea, reverence for fathers—this commandeth
Justice, whom all adore :
Third on her tables this commandment standeth
There graven evermore.

DANAUS.

These prudent prayers, belovèd, I commend :— 710
But be ye not affrighted, when ye hear
These tidings from your father sudden and strange.
As from a watch-tower, from this suppliants' seat
I spy their ship. For all mistake too plain
Are set of sails and boarding-fence of hull,
The prow, with eyes to scan her path afront,
With ears to hear—too well for such as be
Her foes—the guidance of the helm astern.
Now plain to see their mariners throng the decks :
Through folds of vesture white their swart limbs
show. 720

Her sister-ships, yea, all their battle-aid,
Are full in view. She, under lee of land,
Hath furled sail—oars are swinging timed as one.
Now calm and self-controlled look in the face
Your strait : be not forgetful of these Gods.
Helpers and daysmen hither will I bring.
Herald or envoy haply shall they send,
Looking to seize their prey and hale away.
But nothing shall betide thus : fear them not.
Yet better were it, if our rescue linger, 730
That never ye forget yon help divine.
Take heart : at last, and in the day ordained,
Vengeance shall light on god-contemning men.

CHORUS.

Father, I fear!—so swift of wing yon ships
Have come—no breathing-space they give to us!

(Str. 1)

Dread grips me with exceeding sore affright
Lest nought avail me this my far-spced flight:—

Father, I faint with terror's stress!

DANAUS.

Since fixed and sure the vote of Argos rests,
Take heart: they shall fight for thee, well I know. 740

CHORUS.

Reckless and furious is Ægyptus' seed,
Insatiate of fight: this knowest thou.

(Ant. 1)

With oaken ribs and darkly-scowling eye
Hither their ships with arrowy fury fly
Bearing a swart host numberless.

DANAUS.

They shall find many a warrior here whose arms
Are bronzed and hardened in the noonday sun.

CHORUS.

Alone ne'er leave me!—father, I implore!
A woman lorn is naught—is courage-void!

(Str. 2)

Frenzied they are, and with madness their heart over-
flows, 750
For their souls are unclean, and as little as carrion
crows

Altars they spare.

DANAUS.

Well shall it vantage us, O children mine,
If so they add the Gods' hate unto yours.

CHORUS.

For dread of tridents or of bolts of Gods,
Father, they will not hold their hands from us.

(*Ant. 2*)

Overweening they are, and their passion with impious
might
Raveth, and rabidly raging with currish spite
For no Gods do they care.

DANAUS.

But, saith the saw, wolves overmaster curs, 760
And byblus-fruit surpasseth not good wheat.

CHORUS.

The hearts of monsters lewd and impious
Have they : we must beware them with all speed.

DANAUS.

'Speed,' quotha ! Not with speed do sea-borne hosts
Put out nor anchor. Shepherds of the ships
Dare not, the very anchorage won, straightway
Bring safe-securing hawsers to the shore ;—
Then least, when at the nightfall they have reached
A havenless coast. When sinks the sun, the night
Brings to the wise shipmaster travail sore. 770
Thus, no fair landing of a host can be
Ere at her moorings safely rides the ship.
See thou forget the Gods not, in thy fear

Looking for aid. The city shall not blame
This aged envoy, young in eloquence.

[*Exit.*

CHORUS.

(*Str. 1*)

O mountain-land, championing majesty,
What now shall befall me?
Whitherward o'er this Apian soil shall I flee?
Where shall what hiding-place waiting for me
With gloom overpall me?
Oh to be wafted in smoke to the sky
Against clouds blackly showing! 780
Oh that as dust I were whirled up on high,
Wingless, yet vanishing so that no eye
Might follow my going!

(*Ant. 1*)

From the doom unavoidable refuge is none!
Hard-throbbing doth sicken
Mine heart, for a darkness is fallen thereon!
Through thy watching, my sire, am I wholly undone:
I swoon terror-stricken.
My soul chooseth strangling—O yea, let the cord
Of my life make an ending,
Ere this body be clasped by a husband abhorred!
Death's King will I rather accept for my lord, [790
Unto Hades descending.

(*Str. 2*)

Oh for a throne in the firmament clear
Where to snow the cloud turneth!
Oh for the brink of a precipice sheer,
Smooth, beetling, whose lone pride none draweth
near,
Whose peak no man discerneth,

Haunted of vultures—sole witness, I wis,
Of the deathward-rushing
Plunge that should hurl me far down the abyss,
Or ever I light on such bridal as this—
This horror heart-crushing !

(*Ant.* 2)

Then unto dogs if a banquet I fall, 800
Or to vulture and raven,
I reckon not ; for death shall have saved me from all,
Shall have saved from the shame and the tears of
the thrall,
My refuge, mine haven !
Yea, or ever such bride-bed of horror I know,
Like a shaft from a quiver
Strike, doom, to mine heart ! Whitherward shall
I go
In this land to escape the embrace of a foe ?
Who, who shall deliver ?

(*Str.* 3)

Shriek, sister ! The voice of thy crying, O send
Through the high heavens ringing,
Till the Gods to the chant of our litany bend
Deliverance-bringing. 810
Let thy suppliants, O Father, find grace in thy sight,
Let thine eyes all-beholding
Flash vengeance on these who would outrage the
Right,
O Zeus of the all-controlling might,
Of the grasp earth-enfolding !

(*Ant.* 3)

For Ægyptus' sons be an arrogant race,
And, relentlessly questing

Their faint-fleeing quarry, they hold me in chase
 With fury unresting 820
 To seize me, with many a clamorous cry,
 With the madness of passion!—
 Yet the beam of the balance thou holdest on high,
 Zeus all-overruling: thee none may defy
 Who all issues dost fashion.

[Egyptian Herald seen approaching.]

Woe's me and alas! O anguish of fear!
 From his galley the spoiler hath leapt—he is here!
 Hence, spoiler!—what meaneth thy pirate-raid?
 I lift up my voice, I shriek for aid—
 What ho! what ho! their pirate-band 830
 Beginneth the deeds of the violent hand!
 Hasten! hasten! for help, ah, fly!
 For with scowling brow and with wanton eye
 Around us is closing the hunters' ring!
 Champion thy suppliants' cause, O King!

Enter Egyptian Herald.

HERALD.

Get you hence to yonder ship!
 With your utmost speed be gone!
 Else the rending clutch shall grip
 Tresses—goads shall drive you on:
 Else the gouts of blood shall drip 840
 From the heads that I will hew
 From your shoulders—hence away!
 Speed you to the ships, I say,
 With a malison on you!

CHORUS.

O that adown through the rush of the surges, the
pathways of brine,

Thou and thy galley had sunk, with that tyrannous
outrage of thine!

Then might we long in inviolate happiness sojourn
again.

Hence!—from thy madness of violent assay, I adjure
thee, refrain! 850

Ho! to mine help! to mine help!—get thee hence
from the sanctuary!

Hence to thy ship!—let the burg of the Argives be
reverenced of thee!

Never again may I look on the river that fathers the
meads

Where the great cattle are grazing, the acres whose
increase feeds

Mortals, and maketh the life-giving blood pulse strong
in the frame!

Hence! I am Argive by lineage of old time; of
princes I came. 860

HERALD.

Babble on!—yet back again
Shalt thou to the ship amain,
Be thou loth or be thou fain.

CHORUS.

Come to my succour, ye Argives! O haste with your
uttermost speed!

HERALD.

Get thee down unto the sea,
Ere mine hand mishandle thee.

CHORUS.

Woe and alas ! O that thou with thine hands on yon
surf-whitened mead
Down may be dragged to destruction, storm-buffed
to and fro
Off the huge sand-mound of hero Sarpedon, while
great winds blow ! 870

HERALD.

Ay, shriek and yelp and call upon the gods !
Thou shalt not overleap the Egyptian bark.
Shriek in a strain of wailing bitterer yet !

CHORUS.

Woe and alas ! May the billows engulf thee in act
to round
Cyprus's forest-clad headlands, and there be thine
insolence drowned,
So that by broad-flowing Nile which despatched thee
thou mayst not be found ! 880

HERALD.

Hence to the galley homeward-bound, I say,
With all the speed ye may. Let none delay ;
Else by the hair we drag you ruthlessly.

CHORUS.

Woe for me, father ! This demon in shape of a mortal
doth close
Step by step round me, like web of a spider, his
cordon of foes !
Fettered as one in a nightmare I shriek—oh Earth-
mother, hear ! 890

Thrust thou this horror away!—Earth-mother, Zeus
Father, be near!

HERALD.

Nought do I dread the Gods that here abide:
They nursed my childhood not, nor fed mine age.

CHORUS.

Nearer it glides—'tis an adder two-footed!—it grip-
peth mine heel!
Ah, mother Earth, thrust the monster from me!—
Mother, hear as I kneel!
Earth-mother, hearken my cry!—Zeus, Father, hear
thou mine appeal! 900

HERALD.

Except ye yield and pass unto the ship,
Rending shall pity not your broidered robes.

CHORUS.

O princes of Argos, O chiefs, they o'ermaster me!

HERALD.

Princes enow, Ægyptus' sons, shall ye
Soon see. Fear not, ye shall not lack control.

CHORUS.

Undone!—O King, they entreat me impiously!

HERALD.

Meseems that I shall clutch your hair, and drag,
Seeing ye are not quick to hear my words. 910

Enter King of Argos, attended.

KING.

Ho there! what dost thou? By what arrogance
Insultest thou this land Pelasgian?
To a burg of women, think'st thou, art thou come?
To Greeks thou art malapert, barbarian thou!
All wide thy wit hath shot—not one shaft true.

HERALD.

How now?—wherein have I o'erstepped my rights?

KING.

First, thou know'st not how aliens should bear them.

HERALD.

Ay, so?—I have found the thing I lost, and take!

KING.

And gav'st what Argive patrons notice first?

HERALD.

To Searcher Hermes, of all patrons chief. 920

KING.

To a God, forsooth!—Gods dost thou reverence not.

HERALD.

The Gods that sit by Nile do I revere.

KING.

They that dwell here be nought, by this thou say'st?

HERALD.

Now will I know who dares take these from me.

KING.

Touch them, and thou shalt rue it, and that soon.

HERALD.

Shame on ye!—be these words to welcome guests?

KING.

No guests of mine be they which rob the Gods.

HERALD.

This will I go and tell Ægyptus' sons.

KING.

Nought reck I, that I should lay this to heart.

HERALD.

Hold, that I may of clearer knowledge speak— 930
It fits that herald make a plain report
Of all—what shall I say then? Robbed by whom
Of their kinswomen, pass I to my lords?
Sooth, not by witnesses the War-god tries
This cause; nor he by mulct of silver heals
The strife. No; many a man must fall ere then,
And many a quivering foot spurn life away.

KING.

What is my name to thee? In due time thou
Shalt learn it—thou, and they that sail with thee.
These, their consent first won, their hearts' free love,
Take, if by righteous pleas ye can persuade. [940

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Thus the decree was, passed as with one voice
By Argos' folk—to yield not up to force
Yon troop of women : and their ordinance,
A nail in a sure place fastened, resteth firm.
Not upon tablets is this written down,
Neither in folded scrolls of books sealed up,
But clearly from the tongue of freedom thou
Hearest it. Get thee from my sight with speed.

HERALD.

We are like to make new war, and that straightway.
Be victory and mastery to the men ! [950

KING.

Ha ! ye shall find the dwellers in this land
Are men—no swillers they of barley-brew !

[Exit Herald.

Now, all ye maidens, with your handmaids dear,
Take heart, and enter our fair-fencèd town
Fast locked within her shrewd-devisèd towers.
For homes—we have many public hostelries ;
And with no niggard hand myself am housed.
Here may ye dwell in halls where lodge with you
Many beside : or, if this like you more, 960
Here may ye dwell in mansions each by each.
Of these the best and most acceptable
Choose freely. Lo, your champion am I,
With all my people whose decree is made
This day. Wait ye for higher authority ?

CHORUS.

Now, for thy good deeds, good things be
Showered, as from fountains welling free,

Lord of Pelasgian men, on thee !
King, of thy grace do thou send hitherward
Danaus my father, that stouthearted lord,
That he for us may take thought and may guide ;
For his, not our devising, shall decide 970
In what place of kind welcome we abide.
Of such as speak an alien tongue are all
To censure prone—yet may the best befall,
That good report be ours, and to no word
Of anger may the land's true sons be stirred.
Now range you, ye our handmaid-retinue,
Each by her mistress, as for service due
Our father in our dower allotted you.

DANAUS.

Children, we ought to pray to Argos' folk, 980
And sacrifice, and, as to Olympian Gods,
Pour out drink-offerings. They our saviours are.
Hearing my tidings to their magistrates,
Bitter against your kinsmen waxed our friends.
And lo, this train of spearmen unto me
They gave, that princely honour might be mine,
And that I might not fall by sudden spear
Unwares, and blood-guilt burden aye the land.
We, thus entreated, in our hearts' chief place
Must throne in highest honour gratitude. 990
Now grave ye these upon your hearts by those
The many more wise counsels of your sire.
A band of strangers proven is by time ;
And each man bears a tongue prompt to defame
The sojourner, and slurs are lightly cast.
Now I exhort you, bring not shame on me,
Ye who have beauty, that strong lure for men.

Soft summer fruit is passing hard to ward;
 Brute beasts make havoc of it, yea, and men—
 Both spoilers winged, and thieves that tramp the
 earth. 1000

Love's Queen proclaims, 'The ripe fruit oozes nectar!'
 Whenso she finds the orchard-gates ajar.
 Then at the maiden's lovely winsomeness
 The witching arrow of the eye's desire
 Each shoots in passing, overcome by love.
 Then be not that fate ours in flight wherefrom
 We travailed sore, and ploughed broad fields of sea;
 Nor work we shame unto ourselves, and joy
 Unto our foes. For dwellings—twain there be;
 Pelasgus proffereth this, the city that, 1010
 To dwell in without hire—fair fortune this.
 Only observe ye these your sire's commands,
 Honouring more than life pure chastity.

CHORUS.

In all else may the Olympians prosper us!
 And, for my bloom of youth, fear not, my sire:
 For, save the Gods have purposed some strange harm,
 From the old path my soul's feet shall not swerve.

(Str. 1)

Set forward, and raise the chant of praise to the Gods
 ever-blessèd who ward this town,
 And to them which beside Erasinus abide, the Argive
 river of old renown. 1020

O handmaid-train, take up the strain: be the city
 Pelasgian our praise's theme:
 Let our lips no more in hymns adore the godhead of
 Nile's broad-flowing stream;

(Ant. 1)

But the rivers we sing that to this land bring their
still sweet draughts that have multiplied
Her offspring, and rolled o'er her deep soft mould the
joy of fertility far and wide. 1030
Chaste Artemis stoop to behold our troop with com-
passion : in wedlock-thralldom chained
By Cythera's Queen may we ne'er be seen—by them
that hate us be this prize gained !

(Str. 2)

Yet let none deem that I lightly esteem the Cyprian
One in my loyal strain ;
For with Hera doth she in majesty most near unto
Zeus Most Highest reign ;
And in honour we hold the subtle-souled, the Goddess
who kindles the sacred fire ;
And these abide at their mother's side, and they share
her solemnities—yearning Desire, 1040
And Suasion withal, whose accents fall so winsome-
pleading that none may deny her :
And to Harmony of her office high hath Aphroditê
given a share ;
And the whispering dalliance of love is there.

(Ant. 2)

HALF-CHORUS I.

Ah yet but I fear lest pursuit be near, lest the blast
of the terrible ones blow hard,
Bringing anguish and pain, and the crimson stain of
murderous battle hitherward.
Else, why did the chase in triumphant race with
favouring winds o'er the waters ride ?

HALF-CHORUS 2.

Ah hush !—what thing Fate meaneth to bring, even
that and none other must needs betide.
The purpose designed of the mighty mind of Zeus
none crosseth nor turneth aside :— 1050
Yet O that my fate, that my wedded state might now
at the last be peace and bliss
Such as many a woman hath known ere this !

(Str. 3)

HALF-CHORUS 1.

May Zeus the Almighty avert this lot
That the sons of Ægyptus wed me not !

HALF-CHORUS 2.

Ay, that were the best boon Fate could grant.
But thou thinkest to melt the adamant.

HALF-CHORUS 1.

Yet the future dost thou not understand.

(Ant. 3)

HALF-CHORUS 2.

Nay, who am I, that of me should be scanned
The mind of Zeus, the unplumbed abyss ?
Yet be thy desire not presumptuous in this. 1060

HALF-CHORUS 1.

What measure wouldst thou then prescribe unto
me ?

HALF-CHORUS 2.

Search not Heaven's purpose too curiously.

(Str. 4)

HALF-CHORUS 1.

O may Zeus the King afar
Drive from me such wedlock-war,
He whose touch assuaging brought
Io's bitter pains to nought,
He whose healing hand's control,
Gently violent, made her whole.

(Ant. 4)

HALF-CHORUS 2.

Victory may he grant to us !
May it end no worse than thus !
Still the better part be mine :
Judgment still may Heaven assign
To be handmaid unto Right
Through my prayers' prevailing might.

1070

[*Exeunt Omnes.*]

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